



LAWNMOWER THEORY OVER DAMAGE TO ZULU WAR HERO'S GRAVE



The damaged grave of Colour Sgt Anthony Booth, inset

DAMAGE to the grave of a Victoria Cross war hero in Brierley Hill, initially thought to be vandalism, is now believed to have been caused by a lawnmower.

Police revealed they were not treating the damage to Colour Sergeant Anthony Booth's grave in St Michael's Church, Brierley Hill, as a crime.

Questions have now been asked why, if it was caused by a council worker, the incident was not reported. Dudley Council said it had received no reports from its maintenance teams over the damage.

West Midlands Police spokeswoman Lara Horsley said: "Police are not investigating a damaged grave in St Michael's Church in Brierley Hill any further, as it is believed

the damage was caused accidentally by a lawnmower."

The headstone was found knocked over last week and there was widespread outrage over apparent desecration of the grave by vandals.

Appeal

The Victoria Cross Trust launched an appeal to raise money to repair the Zulu War hero's grave, which received more than £3,000 in donations in its first few days.

The trust's chief executive, Gary Stapleton said there was no evidence to confirm how the memorial came to be damaged.

He said that theories were 'being bandied about', adding: "There is no evidence to say

it was vandals and there is no way to say it was a lawnmower, or any other theory.

"The very fact it was not reported, that's desecration by vandalism as far as I'm concerned, even though it's not seen as a criminal thing."

A police spokesman confirmed there was no evidence a lawnmower was the cause but officers were working on that assumption that it was not a deliberate act.

A member of Dudley's Royal British Legion put up a £2,000 reward for information leading to the prosecution of the vandals.

Colour Sgt Booth, of William Street, Brierley Hill, was awarded the medal by Queen Victoria in recognition of his bravery in leading his men to safety.

TRANSPORT

Campaigners call for return of bus service

BUS passengers are demanding the return of a withdrawn service that served Blackheath.

More than 250 people have signed a petition calling for the return of the number 89 Oldbury and Blackheath bus to Birmingham and back after it was rerouted.

National Express changed its route following a shake-up of services earlier this year. Now a petition signed by people in Oldbury, Langley and Smethwick has been handed to Transport for West Midlands.

National Express announced changes to some of its services earlier this year.

The 89 now runs from Birmingham to West Bromwich rather than to Oldbury.

BUILDING

New era begins for church after blaze

A CHURCH which suffered a devastating fire will be opening its newly-refurbished auditorium next month.

The Zion Christian Centre, which has been based in Halesowen for 40 years, changed its name to Lifecentral Church earlier this year. It will include a 400-seater auditorium with new offices and toilets at the site in Little Cornbow.

The official opening of the new facilities will take place on September 15.

HOSPITAL

Patients flee in A&E false alarm

PATIENTS were evacuated from a unit at Russells Hall Hospital on Monday after a fire alarm sounded.

Fire crews attended the hospital but it turned out to be a false alarm.

The A&E department was evacuated for a short period during the scare. The site was checked over by firefighters after the alarm went off around 10.50am.

INSIDE

BRUCIE IN THE BLACK COUNTRY



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Hope of no more nasty surprises at beauty spot WOODS REOPEN IN THE AUTUMN

A BEAUTY spot that was forced to close due to dog attacks, drug dealing and outdoor sexual activity will reopen this autumn, officials say.

As 'a last resort' Uffmoor Wood, near Halesowen, was shut in May by The Woodland Trust due the sheer volume of anti-social activities going on in the woods.

The move followed a spate of problems that had included off-road bikes ripping through the nature area, irresponsible dog owners allowing their pets to foul the bluebell wood and people meeting for sexual liaisons.

However, trust bosses now say the woodland between Halesowen and Romsley will be made 'safer and more secure' for its reopening in either October or November this year.

The area's security has been overhauled in recent months with new fencing, signs and the removal of dens.

Patrols

Hollie Anderson, spokesperson for The Woodland Trust, said: "We are aiming to have it reopened by the end of the year. There is still work to be done on the site, but the main thing is that we have given it time to breathe."

"We need to make sure the space is safe and more secure. We will do this by having more signage with policies of dog walking and also better patrols on anti-social behaviour."

"We've also been clearing unofficial dens, fly-tipped waste, windblown trees from the paths and mending breaches in the fence."

Report by Clare Butler

ing. Other future improvements will involve some forestry work that will increase visibility from the highway, promoting confidence and security.

"We haven't set a firm opening date yet - we want the wood to be back to its best."

In June, bosses deemed the site as being unsafe with reports continuing to be received about illegal activities.

But a Freedom of Information request submitted by The Friends Of Uffmoor Woods revealed only 28 reports of anti-social behaviour at the woodland had been reported to police since 2012.

Campaigners were angered by the closure of the popular beauty spot, saying that they were 'gutted' that their 'happy place was out of bounds'.

A West Mercia Police officer said they had made regular patrols at the site.



Uffmoor Wood, near Halesowen, was closed to the public by The Woodland Trust earlier this year

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NIGEL HASTILOW

He always tackles the hot topics head-on

Traveller transit camp is suggested

A TRAVELLERS' holding camp will be in place next year in Dudley but hundreds of angry residents would rather see hot spots sealed off.

The transit camp will provide a place for travellers to stay when they arrive in the borough rather than pitching up on unauthorised land.

It is expected the new site – to be ready by May next year – will cut the amount of illegal camps by 70 per cent. There have been 11 unauthorised encampments so far this year costing taxpayers £50,000 in cleaning up costs.

Around 200 residents, who packed out a public meeting last week demanding answers, said they would rather see measures put in place to stop

travellers gaining access to sites, such as a moat or bollards.

But this was played down by council chiefs who said fortifying all 3,000 potential sites in Dudley would cost around £1 million.

Secure

Dudley Council leader Councillor Patrick Harley, said: "This behaviour recently has been unacceptable. It has been appalling. This is why we have taken a tougher stance. The long term solution to rid the borough of this problem is to introduce a transit site."

Alan Lunt, Dudley's strategic director, said:

"We do not have that money to secure all the sites. Security does not work either, it does not prevent incursions."

Questions were also directed at West Midlands Police with the force being accused of not doing enough to tackle travellers.

But this was dismissed by Superintendent Phil Dolby, the force's lead on unauthorised encampments, who said his team often had difficulty arresting travellers for crimes such as criminal damage as it was difficult to narrow it down to the individual.

A location for the proposed transit site has not yet been decided on.

Baby dies after being sent home by doctor

A MOTHER woke up to find her eight-week-old baby dead, just hours after being told to take her home by a doctor at an urgent care centre.

Emma George claims the out-of-hours doctor at the centre at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley did not carry out a proper physical examination on baby Felicity.

After the baby's temperature was checked, the 24-year-old says she was told 'you look like a sensible mother bring her back tomorrow if she is any worse'. But 12 hours later Mrs George and husband, Lee, 29, woke up at home in Brierley Hill to find Felicity had turned blue and was not breathing. Baby Felicity was rushed by ambulance to hospital but was later pronounced dead from sepsis.

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group has offered condolences to the family and said it is investigating the incident.

Mrs George said: "Felicity was unwell so I took her to the urgent care centre but the doctor carried out no thorough checks. He told me there was a six-hour wait at A&E. He said: 'You look like a sensible mother, if she gets any worse bring her back tomorrow'. In the morning I woke up and found she had turned blue and was not breathing.



Emma and Lee George – heartbroken



Baby Felicity died after mother told to take her home



Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley where baby Felicity was seen by a doctor at the urgent care centre

Resuscitate

"We rushed her to A&E. They stopped trying to resuscitate her at 7.50am. It is heartbreaking, we feel completely let down by the doctor and do not know where to turn."

As well as complaining to the CCG, the family is also raising money for an operation to reverse a vasectomy Lee underwent in January – two months before Felicity was born.

They need £3,500 to pay for the operation and have started an online fundraiser, which has so far raised almost £1,500. Mrs George, who grew up in Halesowen, said: "We'll never replace Felicity, but we just want her to be a big sister. We have contacted our GP, but have been told only in exceptional circumstances can it be paid for on the NHS."

The couple have three boys – a seven-year-old from Mr George's previous relationship, a four-year-old from Mrs George's previous relationship along with a two-year-old together.

17-year-old was kicked in head during party violence

A 17-year-old was left with serious head injuries after a birthday party exploded into violence, a judge heard.

Fighting broke out in the car park of the Spring Meadow Social Club in Cradley Heath. Wolverhampton Crown Court was told that the victim was floored by a single punch from Sennan Ali, 19, and then kicked in the head while lying motionless on the ground by Rashaun Reid, also 19.

The injured youth was unconscious when paramedics reached the scene on February 27 last year, said Miss Lynette McClement, prosecuting. He was found to be suffering from a fractured skull and a bleed on the brain. At hospital he was put in an induced coma but has since made a good recovery.

Ali admitted causing grievous bodily harm on the first day of his proposed trial and gave evidence against Reid who was convicted of a similar offence. Both were of previous good character.

Ali from Orchard Road, Netherton, was given 16 months detention in a Young Offenders Institution suspended for 18 months and ordered to pay a total of £750 in compensation and costs. Reid of Petford Street, Cradley Heath received two years detention suspended for 18 months with 200 hours unpaid work and £1,250 compensation and costs.

Pudsey behind £250k boost

THREE projects in Sandwell which help young people have been awarded a combined £250,000 boost from BBC Children in Need.

Bangladeshi Women's Association in Sandwell has been awarded a three-year grant of £89,905 to 'deliver after-school activities to support disadvantaged children and young people living in areas of deprivation'.

A grant of £71,296 has been allocated to the Yemeni Community Association in Sandwell to deliver social and education activities for disadvantaged young people.

Centre Spot CIC has been awarded a three-year grant of £90,832 to provide peer mentoring and training opportunities to young people living in areas of deprivation.

Trampoline centre bounces into town

A NEW trampoline centre will be opening in Dudley, creating 33 jobs.

Leap Dudley has been given the green light to convert a former warehouse on Birmingham Road, opposite Tesco, with 64 trampolines, plus restaurant, soft play area and multi-sports area.

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Jail for son who stole £200k from his ill mother

A MAN has been jailed after he took advantage of his ill mother, aged in her 90s, to spend more than £200,000 of her money on his failed business in the Black Country.

David Kettle, 64, claimed he was paying for his mother's care at a nursing home but a court heard that while he was using some of the money to pay for her care, he was also spending money on a fast-food restaurant venture in Halesowen.

Kettle, of Bromsgrove, had claimed his mother knew of the venture and approved of the plan. However Judge Jonathan Gosling dismissed those claims. The judge said: "It is preposterous that she would have agreed for you to take over her finances after having a failed business venture in the past. There is no mitigation for this."

Judge Gosling jailed Kettle for five years and nine months at Shrewsbury Crown Court, after he admitted a charge of stealing £228,575.81 from his mother, now 93. He also admitted failing to turn up on the day of his trial.

The court heard Kettle took the money between January 2015 and July 2016. It was said he had agreed to pay the nursing home fees in Bridgnorth but concerns were raised when the unpaid bills reached £25,000.

Judge Gosling read information from Kettle's mother's GP, which said she had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Kettle had failed to arrange power of attorney over her money.

Benjamin Williams, mitigating, said Kettle had good intentions with the money and had visited his mother regularly.

Speed guns will help slow racers

COUNCILLORS in Halesowen have joined forces to buy equipment to use in tackling the menace of speeding in their area.

Speed guns and high visibility jackets will be used by councillors Stuart Henley, Karen Shakespeare and Hilary Bills, who together represent the Halesowen North ward.

The move comes after residents flagged up the issue of speeding in the area to neighbourhood police over recent months.

Long Lane at Shell Corner has been labelled a hot spot for boy racers by councillors as drivers are speeding up and down the road late at night.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "We will continue to patrol areas when we receive complaints for boy racing."

Arrogant thug made her life a misery

THE heartbroken family of murder victim Tina Billingham have spoken of their loss as her brutal partner Ronald Cooke starts a jail sentence of at least 24 years.

Jack, one of her two sons from an earlier marriage, said: "A huge part of our lives has been taken from us. She was the joker of the family and her warm laughter will be sadly missed. Her family is left with a void that will never be filled. A piece of the jigsaw has gone and we were never given the opportunity to say goodbye. She would never have wanted us to be sad but our sadness is overwhelming. She was always willing to help others."

Cooke, who had lived with Miss Billingham, 54, at a rented house in Granville Road, Old Hill, for 17 years, was jailed for life after being convicted of her murder following a trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court. He must serve at least 24 years before being considered for release by the parole board.

The controlling 55-year-old, who admitted being both physically and mentally abusive to his partner during their stormy relationship, stabbed her twice, through the heart and liver, with a sword stick before claiming that she had killed herself.

Son Jack said: "She and would never have taken her own life, no matter how hard it got."

The heavily built car dealer launched the attack on his eight stone victim in his van as they drove to

collect her elderly uncle from hospital on February 6. He was furious that the trip delayed him travelling to view a cut-price camper van that he wanted to buy.

Cooke repeatedly prodded her with an empty drinks bottle as they argued and then grabbed the sword stick he regularly carried in the vehicle. He drove to her GP's surgery at Rowley Healthcare in Hawes Lane, where he told staff she had stabbed herself.

Cooke's lies were exposed after police checked CCTV from security cameras. Detective Inspector Harry Harrison said: "Cooke was clearly a bully and was the root cause of an awful lot of misery in Tina's life. Arrogant to the end, he has shown no remorse."

Bully stabbed partner to death with a swordstick

FOUL-TEMPERED bully Ronald Cooke is starting at least 24 years behind bars after savagely murdering his partner of 17 years.

The 55-year-old was furious with Tina Billingham because he had been stopped from going to see a camper van offered for sale and blamed her for missing the bargain after she had to collect her elderly uncle from hospital.

Cooke goaded the slightly-built 5ft 4ins tall 54-year-old, repeatedly prodding her with a plastic bottle on the trip to the hospital from their home in Granville Road, Old Hill, on February 6.

Then he stopped the van, reached for the sword stick he kept in the vehicle and stabbed her twice, through the heart and liver.

The callous car dealer then drove straight to her GP's surgery at Rowley Healthcare in Hawes Lane, Rowley Regis, where he told staff she had stabbed herself. Paramedics took her to hospital where she was certified as dead the same day.

Cooke had a 'fascination' with knives, swords and bayonets as well as a history of aggressive, destructive behaviour. Miss Billingham was frightened of him and was driven to depression by his bullying.

Ferocious

Judge James Burbidge QC told Cooke: "She was selfless. You were entirely selfish. You took a ferocious weapon and thrust it into her body twice. You had treated her abysmally all day over a trifle. You had been delayed in viewing a camper van."

Miss Billingham - whom friends said always put the needs of others first - suffered severe depression and had taken at least one drug overdose, after which the defendant refused to call an ambulance.

Cooke had a habit of exploding into wild rages when he did not get his own way.

The short-tempered tyrant regularly went on wrecking sprees in the house that he shared with his partner. On one occasion he hurled part of a dumbbell through a window.

On the day she died he had destroyed the house phone, smashed her mobile and thrown a toy box, which hit her before their dog intervened, biting both of them.

Miss Billingham had two children from an ear-



Killer Ron Cooke lied in a bid to cover his crime

lier marriage. Her eldest son Harry, aged 30, said: "When Ron was not in a good mood he shouted and acted aggressively."

"He would smash things; TVs, tables, ornaments. It would happen every few months."

"If mum didn't keep the house clean he would shout at her, calling her scruffy and a tramp. He deliberately damaged things she liked such as her clothes and her leather three-piece suite."

Younger son Jack told police: "Although mum put on a happy face she told me she didn't want to live like this."

"It was a controlling relationship. Ron was in the habit of telling her what she could or could not do. He did not like her going out on her own. I never saw him hit her but I saw her with injuries."

Cooke became increasingly irritated by the amount of time Miss Billingham spent at the home



Murder victim Tina Billingham was stabbed twice

of an elderly uncle who suffered from dementia. Cooke, who killed his partner with a sword stick taken from the uncle's home, revealed: "I asked her not to get involved. I told her we did not need that at this time of our life but the responsibility fell on her."

They were driving to collect the uncle and take him to his home when Cooke stopped his van to launch the deadly attack. It almost certainly took place in the vehicle near Old Hill railway station.

Miss Billingham's sister Mandy Collins found her with a black eye and bruised face following an incident around four years ago. Then the battered victim, who had kept the attack secret, asked: "What have I done to deserve this?"

The same question was being asked by heartbroken friends and family as her partner started a life sentence behind bars.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Computer shop to be a micropub

A FORMER computer repair store in Halesowen will be converted into a micropub.

A planning application was put forward in May for the Kent Road site, which has now been approved.

The new venture will involve the demolition of a series of outbuildings. Some 17 letters of objection had been received following consultation with the 93 neighbours and the posting of a site notice. Among concerns were that the new site would increase noise and traffic.

Offices and staff accommodation also forms part of the plans, which were given the green light on Monday.

Cycle legend Hugh backs fundraiser

BLACK Country cycling legend Hugh Porter will see off riders raising money this weekend as part of annual event.

Dozens of cyclists will tackle either a 100km or 50km route from the Manor Abbey Stadium into the Worcestershire countryside in the Halesowen One Hundred Sportive on Sunday.

Mr Porter, a patron of Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club, will be taking on the 50km challenge.

There is still time to enter. Email halesowen100.hacc@gmail.com or see www.halesowencycling.net/

Free Proms in the Park returns

STAFF and volunteers at Haden Hill House Museum in Cradley Heath are preparing for their annual live music in the park event to round off a summer of activities.

The free Proms in the Park will be held on September 10 at the historic venue off Barrs Road, and picnics are encouraged + weather permitting.

The event will start at 2pm with Martinique Jazz, followed by easy listening songs and the event finishes around 6pm with the rousing sound of Halesowen Brass Band and lots of flag waving patriotic tunes.

Toffee factory offers a sweet opportunity

THE former Bluebird Toffee Factory near Halesowen is available for let.

The famous confectionery company, formed in Birmingham in 1895 by Evesham man Harry Vincent, moved to Hunnington, near Halesowen, when Mr Vincent oversaw the building of a new model factory in 1925. The firm was later taken over and left the site in 1998. Former offices and a warehouse are currently being advertised by Dudley-based Sellors Surveyors.

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Thug locked up for stabbing taxi driver over £20 cab fare

A THUG who stabbed a taxi driver when he insisted on a late-night fare being paid in advance has been jailed. Ryan Mullen had drunk 10 pints and taken cocaine before the attack.

The 25-year-old from Langley High Street rang for a taxi at 1.50am on June 8 when he was standing outside the offices of A1 Central and Oldbury Cars, Mr Paul Spratt, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court. Driver Mr Ekan Rai

Top chefs to attend NEC caravan show

RESTAURATEUR and veteran chef Antonio Carluccio OBE heads the celebrity line-up at this year's Motorhome and Caravan Show at the NEC.

The 80-year-old expert in Italian gastronomy will be joining other names from the world of TV cooking and fine dining in the LIVE Theatre, demonstrating their favourite dishes and launching new products at the event, which runs from October 17 to 22.

Other guests include Caribbean cook Rustie Lee from Birmingham, Celebrity MasterChef winner Lisa Faulkner, MasterChef: The Professionals winner Steve Groves and caravan expert Graham Groves.

The Motorhome and Caravan Show is the biggest event of its kind in the UK. For further details visit the website mcshow.co.uk or call 0844 873 7333.

The taxi driver wanted the £20 fare up front, while Mullen offered to pay at the end of the journey.

"Mr Rai stood firm and was about to ring his firm's operator when he noticed the defendant put his right hand into his trouser pocket. He thought he was taking out the money but Mullen produced a knife and stabbed him in the upper part of the left arm," said Mr Spratt.

The wound needed stitches at hospital. Meanwhile, Mullen had fled but was traced by police through the phone used to call the taxi. He was found at a friend's address in Erdington.

Mullen had previously been locked up for more than four years in 2012 after a stabbing. Also, a month before the taxi driver attack, had had received a community order for battery after punching a steward at an Aston Villa match.

Miss Amanda O'Mara, defending, said: "He realises there is a pattern between his offending and both binge drinking and drug taking. He does not want to repeat the same mistakes."

Mulle pleaded guilty to wounding and possession of a knife. He was jailed for two years and nine months.

Teenage physicist reaches for the stars



Astrophysics student K-Ryan is over the moon with his exam results

AN aspiring scientist is set to become the first of his family to go to university – after securing top A-level grades to study astrophysics.

K-Ryan Hinds, aged 18, from Cradley Heath, landed two A*s and an A, opening the door to a star-studded career.

The Ormiston Forge Academy student is now waiting to start his course at the University of Birmingham.

K-Ryan put his achievements down to the support from his teacher, and being able to study with a tech entrepreneur Rob Laker, which gave him access to high-powered telescopes.

Inspiring

He said: "Looking at the moon and the stars for the first time, in such detail and clarity, instantly put me in a state of awe! It is difficult to describe how inspiring it was."

K-Ryan was given the chance to study with Rob thanks to a programme set up by education charity Access Project.

He had shown a talent for physics early on. In year 10 he won the School Physicist of the Year award from The Ogden Trust, an organisation that encourages the teaching of physics.

Principal of Ormiston Forge Academy Andrew Burns added: "I'm delighted for K-Ryan, his dedication to his studies is to be commended and this recent success is well deserved."

● A-level joy – see page 10

£17k is paid out in valley parking fines

MORE than £17,000 has been paid in parking fines since charges were controversially introduced at a Black Country park last year.

Hundreds of drivers who tried to get away without paying or who overstayed at Sandwell Valley Country Park have been handed fines.

Parking fees were brought in at the West Bromwich site in November in an attempt by Sandwell Council bosses to raise money for maintenance of the park. But the move has proved unpopular with many visitors.

Drivers have to pay from 40p for an hour up to £2 for more than four hours. Those who don't pay face fines of £50.

More than £50,000 has been paid into the parking machines since they were installed.

Penalties can be dished out for not paying or displaying a ticket, not parking correctly in bays or parking when the park is closed. Some 300 drivers have been fined.

Council leader Steve Eling has defended the decision to charge drivers, saying: "We have to maintain our car parks and it is a reasonable set of charges."

"Most people are paying these without complaint. When you consider what you have to pay in some places, including country parks, prices there are low, and we have season tickets."

Coroner's court opens its doors to the public

DUDLEY'S historical coroner's court will be throwing open its doors to the public as part of Heritage Open Day.

The event, on September 9, is a celebration of the country's architecture and culture, and venues not usually open to the public allow access. The Coroner's Court, on St James's Road, Dudley is a Grade II* listed building. See www.heritageopendays.org.uk

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Residents are losing sleep over M5 works

PEOPLE living close to the M5 in the Black Country say that overnight roadworks are making their lives a misery.

Highway England has been carrying out the work to repair M5 Oldbury viaduct since April. The work, which sees the speed limit cut to 30mph at Junction 1 for West Bromwich and Junction 2 for Oldbury, will continue for 18 months.

Nearby resident Natalie Pearce, 41, said: "We can't live like this. We are saying to them, try and do work in the day time. During the night and early hours of the morning let the residents sleep, give us a break."

Paul Bodley, who also lives near to the works, said: "It's pretty grim. We've had them working all night, every night."

Zbigniew Twarowski, Highways England senior project manager, said: "Workers are actively reminded to be considerate in their behaviour, especially as they are working in a residential area."

"We've also reviewed the working hours, particularly where residential areas are concerned."

The agency said the current working hours at the site were from 6am until midnight. But work being carried out near to residents in Birmingham Road and Blakeley Hall Road it is completed by 8pm.

Housing firm share out £5,000 bursary

FIVE community groups have received a share of a £5,000 bursary.

Cala Homes has selected the causes from more than 20 applications.

The cash will be shared by Hagley Primary School, Hagley; Shell Corner Youth Company, Halesowen; West Hagley FC, Stourbridge; 1st Stourbridge Girls Brigade; and Tewkesbury Town Colts FC.

60 more nurses are hired to tackle crisis at hospital

Youngsters help fund lifesaving kit



Staff and children from Cradley Play Nursery with Dudley Mayor Dave Taylor and Paul Grove of FastAid Black Country

A LIFE-SAVING device has been unveiled in the heart of a community thanks to nursery children baking and making crafts to raise funds.

The defibrillator, which has been installed at Cradley Play Nursery in Lyde Green, was purchased by staff and children at the school in case of a heart health emergency.

The nursery raised more than £1,000 for a cabinet to install it on their building, offering easy access to

the emergency device for the whole community.

FastAid Black Country, a community first responders charity, and West Midlands Ambulance Service, then stepped in by donating the defibrillator and training staff at the nursery and members of the community to use it.

Ann Richards, owner of Cradley Play Nursery, said: "We're really pleased we've managed to bring such

an important life-saving device to our community with the help of FastAid and the ambulance service.

"For us, the children are the real stars, they've worked really hard to make things to sell and have even done a sponsored splash to raise money. Thanks to parents, friends and family and staff, who bought items from the children, sponsored them and donated money, we've managed to reach our goal."

RUSSELLS Hall hospital has taken on 60 nurses and midwives in a bid to tackle its ongoing staffing crisis.

Health chiefs at the Dudley hospital have hired an extra 38 new nursing graduates, 12 children's nurses and 10 midwives over the last few weeks.

It comes after The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the hospital, held an 'unsuccessful' recruitment drive in the Philippines. Another attempt to fill roles takes place at the Pensnett Road site today (Thursday).

Siobhan Jordan, interim chief nurse at the trust, said: "Our visit to the Philippines was not successful and we are now focusing our search closer to home. We have successfully recruited 38 new nursing graduates, 12 new children's nurses and 10 new midwives in the last few weeks."

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It was reported in May that staffing levels had not been at a level considered safe between October and April, due to recruitment problems, sickness and pressure on the accident and emergency department. This sparked a search to fill vacancies, including efforts to hire nurses from overseas.

Ms Jordan added: "There are many people who are qualified nurses in their home countries who, due to differences in the registration process, are currently working as support workers or care assistants. We are committed to helping these nurses return to practice and have launched a dedicated programme to support them in gaining Nursing and Midwifery Council registration."

Visit www.facebook.com/DudleyGroupNHS/events

NHS worker denies data disclosures

A CODE controller for the health service has appeared in court accused of obtaining and disclosing personal information about patients over nine years.

Clair Francis, aged 38, who was working for the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital and Dudley Guest Hospital in Dudley and Corbett Hospital Outpatient Centre in Stourbridge, denied the charges.

Francis, of Slater Close, Cradley Heath, faces two allegations of obtaining /disclosing personal data between July 11, 2005, and November 24, 2014, in Cradley Heath.

Her trial will take place at Wolverhampton Magistrates Court on November 9.

The prosecution has been brought by the Information Commissioners Office.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Never mind nuclear, we talk about burger size

IT is strange how different countries have different priorities. While Donald Trump squares up to that strange little man in North Korea, and the pair threaten each other with nuclear weapons, our own government has a very different target in its sights. Oversized beefburgers.

Public Health England is drawing up new guidelines to reduce the calories in popular foods such as burgers, crisps and sausage rolls. Manufacturers will either have to change the ingredients, or make the burgers thinner, and the crisp packets smaller. Hmm, I wonder which they will choose?

Personally, I can't see it working. After all, you may have noticed that Wispa bars in multi-packs are smaller than they used to be. I certainly have. Which is why I now eat two every lunchtime.

□ □ □

YOU might remember a few years ago, there was a big furore about how then education secretary Michael Gove was making A-levels tougher to restore their credibility. You know, less coursework, more exams, recalling and analysing facts rather than telling us how they feel. That sort of thing.

Well, Sally Collier, head of the exam regulator Ofqual, thought this was a bit harsh, and lowered the pass mark to compensate.

"I want the message to be that students have done fantastically well. All our kids are brilliant," she said.

But surely, the whole point of the exams is to find out who is brilliant at what, so they can tailor their careers accordingly.

Imagine you are an academically talented teenager, who knew the exams would be tough, and worked day and night get the best results possible. Then you discover that Neil out of The Inbetweeners has got the same grades as you, because the exam regulator says "all kids are brilliant". I think I would feel slightly nudged.

Neil probably won't be too chuffed either when he finds that all his inflated grades entitle him to is the right to spend the next few years racking up thousands of pounds of debt on a qualification worth slightly more than a roll of Andrex.

Wasn't it better for everybody when A-grades were few and far between, when only the top 20 per cent or so went to university, and they didn't have to pay for it? It also meant that instead of entering adulthood with crippling debts, the remaining 80 per cent did useful vocational courses that led to skilled, well-paid jobs.

Highlighting hares' horrors as pair of heroes pass



Cowboy Glen – gone, but not forgotten, including of course, his famous football



Hare today, but gone tomorrow? thanks to vicious country pursuit in east England



Ty died – the death of a famous TV cowboy and film star, with an amazing real name

Goodbye to Glen and Ty, best of the west

PANORAMA (BBC1) revealed this week that the number of arrests for drunkenness on UK flights or at British airports has soared by 50 per cent in a single year. Although I've had the occasional tippie at 30,000 feet, I have never entirely understood why airports have bars, why drunks are allowed to board planes and why airline staff, who have to deal with the consequences, are expected to sell booze. It wouldn't happen on the Number 47 bus so why does it happen on an Airbus?

NOT so long ago, any pointless action was described as "taking coals to Newcastle." I was reminded of it a few days ago sitting in the sunshine at a cafe beside Rutland Water, one of the biggest reservoirs in England and drinking bottled water, imported from Scotland.

If you're strapped for cash and your kids are still tiny and impressionable, you could probably take them to Rutland Water, which extends over 3,000 acres, for a day and convince them it was the seaside. I had a colleague whose child was four before she twigged that the "Alton Towers" her father took her to every weekend was actually a car wash.

WHY have the cops not managed to catch the jogger who infamously knocked a woman pedestrian almost into the path of a bus in London three months ago? Probably because in police terms it wasn't much of an incident: pedestrian knocked over, only slight bruises. It is only when the CCTV footage is publicised that the judgement and emotions of the Great

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



British Public take over from the police assessment and it becomes the crime of the century. The video horrifies ordinary people. The man is a brute, the woman is defenceless and did you see how close she came to that bus? A man wrongly arrested for the incident (he was in America at the time) has received death threats, so God knows what the mob will do when the real offender is nicked.

A SUDDEN rise in hare coursing in eastern England has been blamed on an early harvest leaving the fields clear. Well, that may be part of the explanation. But the real reason for killing hares with greyhounds is that some people who like to think of themselves as countryfolk are actually sadistic morons.

I CAME across a website this week identifying which of today's second-hand cars will become "a future classic." The snag, as all motorists know from bitter experience, is the ruinous cost of keeping a banger long enough for it to become a collector's item. Future classic = present money-pit.

I WRITE from family experience. In 1971 my father parted with a troublesome Aston Martin for £1,400 and was glad to get that much.

A similar model was auctioned last month for £495,000.

AFTER this week's item on the late Glen Campbell, a reader tells me of a friend who thought the Wichita Lineman was a song about a football match.

A MOGGIE called Ash appeared in a national newspaper as a cheerleader for the latest fad, walking your cat. Ash, wearing a lead, was taken on a three-day hiking trip to Snowdonia and was pictured sitting on a Welsh hillock, allegedly enjoying himself. But he didn't look happy. His eyes and body-language seemed to say: "Please take me home."

CATS are not natural tourists. They love their own little territory. And while some, including our old tabby, enjoy walking with humans, they do it on their own terms and reserve the right to vanish into the hedgerow or dash home. The moment you put a lead on a cat, you try to turn it into something it isn't. And while some good-natured cats will put up with it, others will invoke the cat's ultimate four-footed revenge, and walk out on you.

IT was a bad enough shock to hear that our 1950s cowboy hero Ty Hardin has just died aged 87. But the greater shock was to discover his real name. The man we remember as roo'tin' tootin' Bronco Layne was Orison Whipple Hungerford Jr.

TALKING POINT



Gearing up for a greener transport

WE live in a world which is being defiled by humankind.

The population explosion over the past decades has seen the Earth set inexorably on course for ecological devastation.

Roads heave with chugging, dirty-fuelled 4x4s and older cars which now go on forever, but which cannot claim to be pollutant-free.

Like drones we line up at the traffic lights, inches away from the car in front as a driver of usually a German car (more often than not!) tries to push in from the right – what kind of existence is this? Surely, there is another way.

The argument for electric cars rattles on, but this is simply rearranging the chairs on the Titanic, as the majority of power stations linked to the National Grid are generated by fossil fuels – so that means it's damaging the atmosphere.

But wait, there may be a Lycra-clad answer to all our problems – those magnificent men and women on their pedalling machines.

Bikes are all about these days, with Britain's ongoing successes in the Olympics and alike. A few years ago a survey was carried out which put the UK in 10th place as the most bike-friendly nation in Europe, with Denmark and Holland sharing top spot. This does not translate itself to the roads however, when at times it can feel more like a war of attrition, sharing lanes with motorised traffic.

I don't seek to defend idiots who think they own the road, two abreast or more. Cyclists should know their position in the pecking order, and it is the ones who think they can jump lights, weave in and out of traffic at speed and not consider pedestrians, who will always give the rest of us who just want to get to work, or ride for the fun of it, a bad name.

On the horizon there are self-charging electric bikes being developed, which will mean we don't all have to be Bradley Wiggins to get around, and even with the technology of electric bikes available now, they are the most environmentally-friendly personal transport available on the roads.

In the meantime however, the message to all road users should be that bikes are here to stay and the police now focus more than ever before on inconsiderate drivers who pose real dangers to cyclists with their thoughtless actions. Nearly 19,000 incidents in 2015 resulted in injury to cyclists on UK roads, with 100 killed.

One last message to anyone on the saddle though – make sure you've got a blooming bell!

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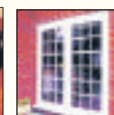
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Caring for environment is rubbish

JUDGING by the recent actions from Dudley Council it is evident that the environmental policy for the borough is shambolic.

Remove all local recycling skips in conjunction with a proposal to centralise current regional sites at some inaccessible location in Brierley Hill. There has been no consideration to public need or wishes or indeed the probable cost associated with the increase of fly-tipping.

Evidently the local re-cycling skips are getting too full too often and the council can't cope. They want to discourage such a

practice and reckon that by removing these local sites it will deliver £45,000 of savings. This relative slim cost-saving measure is coming from the same council who last year co-funded a Ferris wheel structure in Dudley. You really couldn't make it up.

So when your child comes home from school talking about the virtues of looking after the environment, tell them that according to Dudley Council leaders it is all just a load of rubbish.

PHILIP O'DWYER
Hayley Green

Boost trade with rent cut

AS a resident in the borough of Dudley, I have been concerned about the working of our local council for years. Now I wonder if they have finally lost it.

As one walks around the town, there are lots of charity shops, cafes, coffee shops, etc. There are also lots of 'job shops', including a new one in King Street. And the brainy boys are now talking about resurrecting some shops in Wolverhampton Street that have been empty for 25 years - as a job centre.

Why don't they drop the rents on properties so that genuine traders can set up businesses? Surely a rent of £100 per week on premises that are being used is better than £500 on empty buildings!

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

Double trouble in name game

CONFUSED by the spreading use of double-barrelled names, which I always associated with the upper classes, I decided to look up the reason on Wikipedia.

It says 'A double surname is taken on marriage in order to preserve a family name which would become extinct due to the absence of male descendants bearing the name connected to the inheritance of a family estate'.

I am still confused as to why there seem to be so many appearing now.

RON GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

Proud of my roots in Staffs

IT appears to me that over the years the Black Country has got bigger and bigger.

When I was growing up in Smethwick in the 1940s and 1950s, I lived in Staffordshire, so did all the people who lived in Walsall, West Bromwich, Wednesbury and Wolverhampton, even those who lived in Brierley Hill.

Oldbury, Dudley, and Stourbridge were in Worcestershire. The Black Country was a small area between Tipton (Staffordshire) and Wolverhampton, at least it was as far as us Smethwickians were concerned.

Now all people who live in the aforementioned towns live in the Black Country. How can that be?

I should also mention that Birmingham was in Warwickshire. I am proud of my roots (Smethwick), but do not consider them to be Black Country.

MR R W MILLS
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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No surprise some folk go fly-tipping

I contacted Dudley Council to arrange the disposal of two single bed mattresses. I am a 61-year-old man fighting cancer, so moving these myself would be a problem to say the least.

I was told it would cost me £60. That's £30 each. I was amazed. When I lived under Sandwell Council they offered one free collection a year for people aged 60 and over and charged just over

£20 for up to four items. You see so much evidence of fly-tipping, which is deplorable, but if the council charge such high prices it's not surprising. I had to cut my mattresses up and take them to the tip.

I understand the importance of making a charge for services but wonder who thinks these are fair.

MICHAEL SUDDENS
Oldswinford

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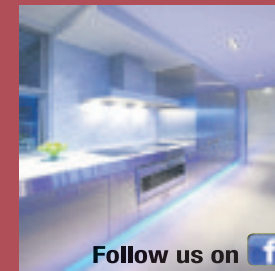
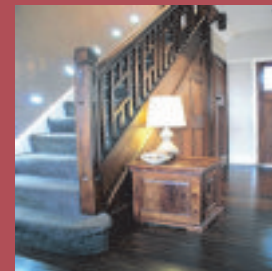
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Council launch bid to claw back £15 million in savings

AROUND £15 million a year will be saved by council chiefs in Dudley as they improve the way they buy goods and services from the private sector, it has been announced.

Millions of pounds are spent each year on building materials, maintenance contracts, construction sub-contractors and social care packages by the authority.

It is hoped the initiative will help to make around £4m in savings that have been targeted from the council's general fund and millions more from the separate housing and school budgets.

The dancing grannies join strong men

THE Fizzogs comedy troupe's Dancing Grannies are among attractions at a three-day festival in the Black Country over the bank holiday week-end.

Sandwell Valley Country Park hosts the summer festival, organised by Bescot Promotions from Walsall and LSD Promotions from Stourbridge. The event is from 9am until 5pm on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Councillor Richard Marshall, Sandwell's cabinet member for leisure, said: "The Sandwell Summer Festival over the August bank holiday looks set to be a great event with something for everyone."

On Sunday and Monday the festival will include Sandwell's Strongest Man Contest. The Dancing Grannies will also perform at the free admission event. There is also a fun fair, a 'beach' and birds of prey on display. There are parking charges.

Bosses say work on transforming procurement processes – the buying of services from outside the council – will also help achieve five per cent savings.

Leader Patrick Harley said it would be an 'exciting move' for the borough.

He said: "The council spends millions of pound each year on building materials, maintenance contracts, construction sub-contractors, social care packages and much more.

Agreement

"By getting our house in order and improving our staffing structure and processes on procurement we can generate significant savings to ensure we have a sustainable budget moving forward.

"This is a very exciting move to ensure Dudley borough residents are getting value for money from their council when we are buying in goods and services from the private sector."

It comes as an agreement was made at a full council meeting in March.

The original proposal was for an external commercial company to be appointed to drive savings but now the changes will be made in-house. A budget of £200,000 will allow external interim support to be brought in.

French fighter jet 'tracks' holiday flight



A picture taken by a passenger as the fighter jet shadowed the holiday flight

A PASSENGER from the Black Country has told how a holiday jet flying from Spain to Birmingham was shadowed by a French fighter plane for up to 15 minutes.

Low-cost carrier Jet2 said it was awaiting confirmation from French aviation officials as to why Flight LS1204 was apparently tracked by the French air force on Friday afternoon.

Pictures of the jet as it shadowed the flight were taken by passengers, showing it side by side their plane.

Sarah Hatfield, from Dudley, who was travelling back from Malaga with husband Ian and their 13-year-old daughter Emily, said it created a mixture of 'excitement and terror' among passengers.

Cabin crew were alerted and the holiday jet's pilot was quick to reassure passengers. Nevertheless, Mrs Hatfield and her family were left unnerved by the incident.

She explained: "The air stewardess announced there was nothing to worry about. Ian was terrified and it didn't help that loads of other passengers came by us to look out at it."

Mrs Hatfield, from Quarry Bank, said of the fighter jet: "It was so close I could read the writing on its tail fin."

The bank worker, whose daughter took several photos of the French plane, added: "The feeling on board was a mixture of excitement at seeing the fighter so close up and terror as to if we were about to get shot down."

£85m deal to include homes at stadium

PLANS have been unveiled for an £85 million development around Edgbaston cricket ground with 375 homes.

The proposals for a four-acre site would also see a new main entrance on Edgbaston Road, a plaza area for match days and an extension to the car park behind the RES Wyatt Stand.

Warwickshire County Cricket Club has sealed a deal with international property investment group Patrizia UK and the Government's Homes and Communities Agency to provide 375 'build to rent' homes.

New shopping and catering opportunities are also part of the deal. However the new development still requires planning and local consents.

Stadium and cricket club chief executive Neil Snowball said: "This next phase of our development is great news for the club and for the city of Birmingham.

"The apartments and retail outlets, combined with the new entrance and plaza, will make the stadium a 365-day-a-year destination and further enhance our match day experience. The announcement of this new development is another key stage in our 20-year Edgbaston Stadium masterplan that started in 2010 with the £32 million investment in the stadium including the iconic South Stand.

Patrizia UK will now develop detailed design plans.

Basketball bid aiming to break new ground

BASKETBALL will be played in Birmingham's historic Victoria Square if the city's Commonwealth Games bid is a success, chiefs have revealed.

Organisers have said 3x3 basketball and wheelchair basketball would be played under a huge canopy next to the council house, with space for up to 3,000 fans, as part of their bid.

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Wedding smile back in a day

A cost-effective solution, the All-on-4™ therapy can offer new teeth in a single day. Encouraged by her granddaughter, a dental professional, super-nan Janet Harris opted for this lifestyle investment that has helped recapture her Big Day smile

WHEN Janet Harris's smile was compromised she knew exactly what she wanted from her dentist. "Definitely no dentures," the super-nan says emphatically.

"My mother had more sets of false teeth than I have fingers, she could never master them and I'm sure I couldn't either," she adds.

"I wanted something just like my own teeth – there's nothing like them – and I didn't want brilliant white teeth either . . . they look ridiculous on someone my age," says the spritely 70-something-year-old financial controller, who works full-time for her family profile cutting business.

Memorable moment

"No," she affirms, taking a black and white wedding album picture from her handbag. "I wanted teeth like those in this photograph when I was 19, natural and not too white." Snapped on her Big Day with husband Colin and brother Brian at the then newly-built Catholic church in Whiteheath, Janet was determined to recover the smile of that memorable moment.

She admits to being lucky with her native teeth and the dentistry she has received since she was child.

But after surviving an astonishing 30 years, three teeth on an upper left bridge fell out. "I also had five teeth at the front on a bridge and I knew it was time to get some new dental work done," she says.

With care, it's possible for bridges to last up to eight years.

"I'd lost a few back teeth when I was a girl. Mum, who was terrified of the dentist, didn't believe in fillings and I was dispatched with my father to have teeth out," she adds.

Those memories of having gas extractions, the predictable sickness afterwards and "the horrible, black rubber mask" are vivid, but Janet still braved regular dental appointments throughout her life. She recalls how her friend attended a questions and an-

swers open day at North Street Dental and Implant Clinic after experiencing problems with a prosthetic prescription and recommended her to chat with the friendly staff.

'No pain'

After initial consultations with implant surgeon Owain Rees BDS DGD (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL) and Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng), Janet continued to research her clinical options.

"I started coming [to the surgery] every

other week to be clear in my own mind about the decision on the treatment. Every-one was patient with me and very helpful answering my questions," says Janet.

Deciding on an All-on-4 option, a system where her full upper arch of teeth is secured on four strategically sited implants, the procedure was completed within a single day.

"I came in on a Wednesday at 9am and by 3.30pm I had my teeth in," she says.

With conscious sedation during the procedure, Janet was able to leave the surgery by

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All-on-4 is a cost-effective implant solution that aims to use only four implants for a complete arch of teeth.

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Go-ahead on homes at historic buildings

PLANS to redevelop derelict former council offices to create apartments and a cafe have been given the go-ahead.

Despite more than 1,000 people opposing the scheme, the Grade-II listed buildings in Great Cornbow and Hagley Street in Halesowen will be transformed into 24 apartments, a cafe and orangery under the proposals.

The plans will also see the landmark James Hobbs hardware shop refurbished.

Twenty-one letters of objection had been sent to Dudley Council, as well as two petitions with a total of 1,060 signatures.

However, members of the authority's development control committee said that a site visit had proved to them that the decision to approve the plans was the right one to make.

Councillor Andrea Goddard, chair of the committee, said: "I did have concerns about the plans, particularly because of the amount of objections registered. However, when I visited the site, my thoughts changed considerably. I didn't want us to lose a valuable listed

By Jordan Harris

building however, I noticed that it was really close to the point of disrepair."

The main issue raised against the plan was that there were already enough cafes and food outlets. But committee members were recommended to approve the plans as officers said they would 'provide a long-term sustainable future for a number of listed buildings'.

Councillor Paul Bradley added: "I had my reservations but to be honest when I got to the site, the situation with the deterioration of the site was explained to me and I could see for myself that something needed to be done."

Payout over father's delayed cancer care



Daniel Hemming during treatment with son Harry

THE family of a cancer patient from Halesowen whose treatment was delayed for more than a year will receive a six-figure settlement.

Wolves fan Daniel Hemming died in March 2014, aged 27, four years after he first sought medical advice regarding a lump on his lower back.

Daniel's partner Fallon Waldron, 28, carried on the legal fight after his death. Now, the case involving Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust and Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust has been settled for an undisclosed sum.

Ms Waldron, who lives in Halesowen with the couple's six-year-old son Harry, said: "I still look back in disbelief that it took around two years from Daniel complaining about the lump for it to be recognised for what it was."

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust's chief executive Diane Wake said: "The claim pursued by Daniel's family has now been resolved by way of a joint settlement. In 2011, we misinterpreted a scan as reassuring. This delayed Daniel's referral to the specialist cancer centre. We are very sorry for this error. This was carefully investigated and no evidence was found that our error contributed to Daniel's death."

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Free hour car park trial to be introduced

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, August 24, 2017

MOTORISTS will be able to park for free on all council-owned car parks in Dudley borough for an hour, chiefs have announced.

However, drivers had been parking for free for two hours on council car parks in Dudley, Brierley Hill, Halesowen and Sedgley since the launch of a pilot in April.

Now council bosses are looking to make changes to the trial so one hour of free parking is offered on all their car parks from October 1, including those in Stourbridge and Kingswinford. The two-hour trial will end on September 30.

Council bosses will roll out a one-hour trial across the whole borough with the intention of bringing it in permanently.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We have listened to local people and anecdotally they have told us the towns are busier than ever. This is great news for business and something that we want to build on, so we are now working up the finances to ensure we can make free parking a permanent offer."

"We are now going to adapt the trial to one hour and include all borough car parks so we can analyse this impact before introducing the best option for the borough."

People who want to take advantage of the one-hour trial will need to print and display a free parking ticket from the machines already in place.

Strictly duo bring dance to top venue

STRICTLY Come Dancing stars Anton du Beke and Erin Boag are bringing their latest tour to Birmingham in the new year.

Anton & Erin are at Symphony Hall on January 27 with tickets priced from £22.50 to £50. The new show will also feature another six world class dancers and the 25-piece London Concert Orchestra, plus Strictly singer Lance Ellington. For tickets see www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.



Dudley College students jump for joy after their nervous wait



Principal David Williams with students at Halesowen College



Dudley College Principal Lowell Williams



Students receive their results at Old Swinford Hospital in Stourbridge



Delighted students at Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath

Class act! Delight at A-levels

Students across Dudley celebrated after getting top grades on A-level results day.

The waiting was finally over for anxious teenagers as they got their hands on their results last Thursday.

Dudley Sixth College students have again excelled with an overall pass rate of 98 per cent showing a consistent picture after last year's result with a high percentage of them achieving higher grades.

Dudley Sixth students began their

celebrations at midnight when their places at University were confirmed under the new UCAS system but then had a sleepless night until they could collect their individual grades at 8am with more than 200 students receiving individual grades at the Dudley site.

A total of 33 of the 37 subjects on offer at Dudley College of Technology achieved a 100 per cent pass rate including Mathematics, Physics, English Language and Literature, Law,

Psychology and Economics.

Dudley College Principal Lowell Williams said: "It always makes me proud when I see Dudley students achieving so much - I see this is the pinnacle of an outstanding year for the college, our learners and the town."

At Ellowes Hall Sports College in Dudley, 40 per cent of entries achieved an A* or A or equivalent with over 75 per cent of entries at grade C or above.

The school also recorded a 97 per cent pass rate which included 13 subjects with a 100 per cent pass rate. Star pupils included Eleanor Taylor with three A*s.

Year 13s at Bishop Milner Catholic College in Dudley achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in 19 subjects. There was a 100 per cent pass rate in 32 subjects at Halesowen College.

At Windsor Sixth Form in Halesowen, 45 per cent of all grades were at A* to B. Fifteen students achieved

the equivalent of at least three A* or A grades.

All students at Old Swinford Hospital in Stourbridge passed their exams across 24 subjects.

Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath capped off the academic year with 84 per cent of the cohort achieving three or more passes at A*-E as 55 per cent earned three or more A-level passes at A* to C and 28 per cent achieved A* to B grades.

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Boss of police group calling for pay rise

WE need a pay rise – that is message from the boss of the body that represents the West Midlands' rank and file police officers.

Tom Cuddeford, chairman of West Midlands Police Federation, said it was time for Government to show 'support and respect' for front line officers and backed calls for a 2.8 per cent pay increase.

Writing in 'Federation', the group's magazine, Mr Cuddeford criticised delays in making a decision on this year's police pay review.

He wrote: "We appreciate that in reality there is no magic money tree, but there are also no magic police officers who can keep making ends meet despite the increased cost of living and their decreased real term wages."

"Police officers seem to be expected to perform all sorts of tricks as they try to provide the same service with fewer resources but maybe it's time the Government conjured up some solutions too?"

Struggling

He said the Police Federation of England and Wales was calling for a 2.8 per cent pay rise to the Police Remuneration Review Board. A decision on the pay review was meant to be taken before the summer but has now been delayed until next month at the earliest.

Mr Cuddeford added: "This is just not acceptable and will cause months of uncertainty for officers at a time when they are already run ragged at work and, in some cases, struggling financially."

"While any pay increase will be backdated to September 1, the date of our annual pay rise – if we get one – it could be months before we actually see any increase in our pay."

Kristian raises baton for city's games bid



Kristian Thomas holds the baton at the Bullring

GYMNASTICS star Kristian Thomas proudly held the Queen's Baton aloft as the countdown to the Commonwealth Games reached the West Midlands.

Officials in Birmingham are hoping the baton will be passed onto the city, which is bidding to host the games after Australia in 2022.

The baton – the equivalent of the Olympic Torch – was in Birmingham to mark its bid to be in next in line for the prestigious competition.

Wolverhampton Olympian Kristian, an Olympic bronze medalist and Commonwealth champion, who trains in Halesowen, posed in front of the Bullring shopping centre with the baton.

Jog along to hand in Race for Life cash

THOUSANDS of women joined the fight against cancer by taking part in Cancer Research UK's Race for Life.

More than 6,500 mothers, daughters, sisters and friends have come together to show their commitment to the cause at Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Coton Park.

Now organisers of the 5k, 10k, and Pretty Muddy events are sending a heart-felt message of thanks to all participants and their supporters who, it is hoped, will raise more than £500,000 in total.

And they're asking them to make every step count by paying in their sponsorship money as soon as possible so it can be used to fund life-saving research. Go to raceforlife.org for more information.

Dudley is worst borough in region for shoplifting

SHOPS are more risk of thefts depending where they are situated in the Black Country, with Dudley the worst for shoplifting, according to new figures.

Fifty cases of shoplifting in the Dudley borough were reported to police in May, more than double the figure for

Walsall. In Sandwell there were 39 and in Wolverhampton 33 such incidents during the same period.

In Walsall the figure was 24 and in Solihull there were just 18.

The figures, obtained after a Freedom of Information Act request to West Midlands Police force, did not surprise traders in Dudley.

Mohammed Sagir, chairman of the Voice of Dudley Businesses, said: "It

is a subject which is raised increasingly by members. There are CCTV cameras all around Dudley, but too often we report crimes, get a reference number and do not hear anything more. We want confidence that these people doing it are getting caught."

West Midlands Police charged 561 in connection with shoplifting offences over the same month and 66 others received a caution.

Chance to have say as forums launched

RESIDENTS are invited to raise concerns and ideas at community forums to be held in Dudley next month.

The meetings, from September 4 to October 2, are a chance to meet local councillors and police officers to discuss and work on issues in the community.

The Dudley Council-run meetings also offer community groups the chance to bid for grants of up to £5,000 for projects or activities which benefit local people.

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council, said: "Making decisions that are right for local people and the borough as a whole is key and that's why it's more important than ever before for people to come along and talk to us about any ideas or issues they have. Our doors are open."

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Artwork at international festival is real glass act

STUNNING artwork from across the globe has arrived in Stourbridge for the International Festival of Glass, opening tomorrow (Friday).

The team at the Ruskin Glass Centre have been carefully unwrapping more than 60 delicate pieces for it's flagship event, the British Glass Biennale.

Sixty-two contemporary artists based in Britain and working abroad were selected for the competition from around 230 applicants. Their prized creations are ready to take pride of place for the awards ceremony today.

"The Biennale is a really good representation of the best of British glass and is highly regarded around the world," said curator Matt Durran.

All work in the Biennale is available for purchase and the event attracts collectors, galleries and museums from around the world. For the first time, there will also be a Biennale shop allowing visitors to purchase a smaller piece created by artists in the exhibition, ranging from a few pounds up to £2,000. Visitors can view the exhibition until September 9.

Piano

Artist Karlis Bogustovs is bringing a touch of glass to the musical world as he plays his one-of-a-kind glass piano. The Latvian-born skateboarder, who has been making waves in the art world, is even inviting visitors to have a go. His amazing creation was previously displayed at London's Canary Wharf.

There is a feast of other entertainment at the festival which runs from August 25 to 28.

The Red House Glass Cone is dusting off its red carpet in preparation for



British Glass Biennale curator Matt Durran at the Ruskin Glass Centre

Andy Garbi's Vitrescence: Becoming Glass. The multi award-winning sound artist, singer and composer and he has worked with the cone's resident glass artist Charlotte Hughes-Martin to develop glass instruments. The performance art is taking place at 8.30pm on Saturday at the Red House Glass Cone and costs £10 per ticket.

Circus Raj will be thrilling the audience at Glasshouse Art College at 7pm

on Monday. A film festival featuring movies with a glass theme will take place at the Ruskin Glass Centre. There will be jazz at the Rose and Crown at 9pm tomorrow and The Crick Crack Club will be bringing storytelling to the Ruskin Glass Centre at 7.30pm on Sunday. The following day, at the same venue, will be a performance exploring the sounds of glassmaking, called Fusion and Fluidity at 2.30pm.

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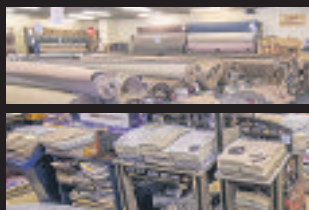
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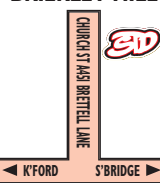
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14 Brother fights extradition in kidnap case

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, August 24, 2017

THE brother of the chief suspect in the alleged kidnapping of British model Chloe Ayling is to fight extradition to Italy.

Ms Ayling, aged 20, is believed to have been snatched by a group calling itself Black Death after being lured to a fake modelling shoot in Milan last month.

Chief suspect Lukasz Herba has said he did not knowingly take part in any crime. Last Wednesday the National Crime Agency (NCA) said his brother, Michal Herba, had been arrested. The 36-year-old was detained by officers from West Midlands Police and East Midlands Special Operations Unit at an address in Tividale.

Michal Herba was apprehended on a European Arrest Warrant issued by the Italian authorities and London's Westminster Magistrates' Court last week heard that he would contest extradition.

London-based Ms Ayling was allegedly drugged and bundled into the boot of a car after being tricked into attending the bogus photoshoot in Milan on July 11.

It is alleged that Poland-born Lukasz Herba, 30, of Tividale, planned the abduction. Italian police claim he is part of the Black Death group active on the dark web.

Get it on with top T Rex tribute band

T Rextasy, the top tribute act to 1970s pop star Marc Bolan, will be bringing glam and glitter to Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Saturday night.

Fronted by Danielz, T Rextasy have been endorsed by the Bolan family and this gig will be particularly poignant as it comes just a couple of weeks before the 40th anniversary of Bolan's death in a car crash, aged 29.

Tickets cost £13 in advance or £15 on the door. T Rextasy will be on stage from 9pm. See the venue's website at therobin.co.uk or call 01902 401211.



At Dudley Hippodrome, Bruce Forsyth, Roy Castle, Ben Warris and Ken Dodd



Bruce on stage with Julie Andrews, left, and Beryl Reid



Sir Bruce Forsyth in recent years



Dudley's famous Hippodrome theatre, where the showbiz star performed



Where career began – Theatre Royal Bilston, since demolished

It began for Brucie in Bilston

HE was the face of Saturday night TV for decades but Sir Bruce Forsyth's career began right here in the Black Country as a starry-eyed teenager.

Bruce's first-ever public appearance was in Bilston in 1942, where at just 14 he sang, danced and played the accordion. Later he appeared at

the landmark Dudley Hippodrome theatre.

He appeared under the stage name The Mighty Atom at the Bilston's Theatre Royal, with billboards splashed across Wolverhampton and Birmingham with 'Boy Brucie, The Mighty Atom'. The Great Marzo topped the bill at the 1,300-seat venue, which sat on the corner of Mount Pleasant.

But the show wasn't a success and ground to a halt after just one week. Speaking in recent years, Bruce joked: "After one week the show folded because I was so terrible. All I got was 13 shillings and fourpence."

Sue Appleby recalled how her mother, who is now 102, was at one of the Bilston shows. She said: "My mum was born in Bilston as Ivy Rolason. She was there at the Bilston

Theatre Royal in what was probably his first ever performance. Billed as Boy Bruce the Mighty Atom, he did a song and dance act and played the accordion.

"My mum always told me how she saw him on stage there and what a wonderful night it was."

The theatre itself lasted until 1957 when it closed and was eventually demolished in 1961.

In later years, Sir Bruce, who died on Friday aged 89, graced the Black Country again, appearing at Dudley Hippodrome.

In 2015, when former box office assistant Amy Shepherd passed away, her son Paul shared some of her photographs and memorabilia from her time at the iconic theatre, including a picture of Bruce with Roy Castle, Ben Warris and Ken Dodd.

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Ian Steel gets the 1951 Tour of Britain Trophy from Vic Davies, MD of Viking Cycles



Bob Thom with his Viking Team in front of their Morris van



Ian Steel in the 1952 Tour of Britain with Viking's Stan Blair and Bob Thom



Ian Steel powering ahead racing for the Viking team

Wheels of Steel helped put city on cycling map

BEFORE Chris Froome and Bradley Wiggins, before even Wolverhampton's own Hugh Porter, British road racing had a Wolverhampton based cycling hero, Ian Steel, winner of the Peace Race in 1952, an event even more arduous than the Tour de France.

Ian rode for Wolverhampton's famous Viking Team, managed by Bob Thom, himself a British Road Race Champion.

In the period just after the War when Wolverhampton's Percy Stallard was leading a revolt against the National Cyclists Union (NCU), the governing body which was totally against road racing, and tried to sabotage all such events, Percy formed the British League of Racing Cyclists.

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

Bob Thom was recruited to manage the local Viking team, and Ian Steel soon became its star.

He won the 1951 Daily Express Tour of Britain, in which the NCU had tried and failed to block foreign teams from competing.

Gruelling

In 1952 the BLRC entered a team, managed by Percy Stallard, in the Peace Race, 1,265 miles in 12 stages through Poland Germany and Czechoslovakia, the most gruelling amateur international stage race on the planet, usually dominated by Eastern Bloc riders.

Managed superbly by Stallard, the British team shepherded Ian Steel

to victory by two minutes 35 seconds from Jan Vesely, the Czech double World champion.

The Union Cycliste Internationale were so impressed they awarded the BLRC associate membership, and ordered the horrified NCU to co-operate, and put British cycling road racing in order. Ian Steel's career was cut short when he was riding in the Tour de France in 1955 for the British team.

His chances were ruined by the orders given him by the team manager, who also managed a rival team to Viking, and tried to favour one of his own.

Ian was was so upset he quite the Tour the next day, and gave up race cycling altogether.

The Viking Team raced on, and Bob Thom, and his son, also named Bob, were coaches and managers of British road and cyclo-cross teams for many years to come.



Bob Thom on the cover of the Viking brochure

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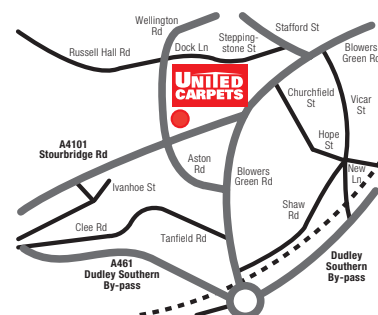
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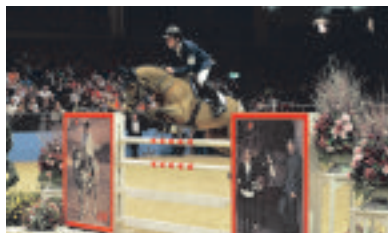
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Have say on future of pitches and parks

PEOPLE have been urged to let council chiefs know which green spaces are important to them as authorities plan for the region's future.

Residents in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton have until September 8 to have their say on how the Black Country Core Strategy should be updated.

They are being asked to think about which green and environmental spaces matter most, this could be anything from cycle paths to sport pitches or parks, open spaces or areas for wildlife.

Chiefs said the feedback will be used to update the strategy – a planning document which will map out development across the four authorities from now until 2036. This includes where homes should be built and where jobs should be provided.

Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley said: "With only a few weeks to go until the consultation comes to an end, I would urge everyone to take a few minutes out of their day to have their say on the big issues."

"The document will not only shape how we continue to protect and improve the local environment but will also set out plans on how

By David Cosgrove

people will get around and how we manage increasing demands for growth in housing and the economy."

The strategy outlines how many homes need to be built and how to plan for the number of extra jobs needed for a growing population. It also decides where new homes and businesses should be located. The document also says there is a need to find the equivalent of more than 300 rugby pitches of new land for industries and businesses in order to create jobs.

Find out more and take part at blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk or pick up a leaflet from a local library. Alternatively, call (01384) 814136.

Tour and new album for rock legend Plant



Robert Plant has two concerts on home turf in the West Midlands to mark the release of new album Carry Fire

ROCK legend Robert Plant will be in concert at venues in Wolverhampton and Birmingham in November and December.

The West Bromwich-born former Led Zeppelin star, now 68, will play the Wolverhampton Civic Hall and the Birmingham Symphony Hall alongside his band The Sensational Space Shifters.

The tour will come hot on the heels of the rocker's new album Carry Fire, which is being released on October 13.

He will be supported at the shows by folk music star Seth Lakeman, who also features on the new album.

Tickets for the Wolverhampton show on November 20 and the Birmingham show on December 12 both go on sale tomorrow (Friday). For further information go to the website wolvescivic.co.uk or call the box office on 0870 3207000 and for Symphony Hall see thsh.co.uk or call the box office on 0121 780 3333.

Students' healthy way to help in community

SANDWELL College has been shortlisted for two national awards as it further cements its key role within the community.

A striking mural created by students is in the running for a 2017 Community Rail Award.

The arts students' 'Smethwick Going Forward 'Love Thy Neighbour' mural at Rolfe Street Station is in the Community Art Schemes Permanent Projects award category, while the station regeneration project, also worked on by college construction students, has been shortlisted for the Involving Diverse Groups award.

The college has links with London Midland, Network Rail and Transport for West Midlands.

Holistic

Meanwhile, continuing the work within the community, beauty therapy and healthcare students have been working with the Kissing It Better charity at Sandwell and City Hospitals.

They have provided holistic treatments and manicures to assist patients in their recovery from strokes and other serious illnesses. As part of the Sapphire Project, organised by ACRC and Age Concern, healthcare students have visited patients on wards and participated in voluntary placements to enrich their studies.

Carole Richardson of Kissing It Better said: "They all did amazingly well."

In addition beauty students have provided complimentary treatments at a community event held at Santander in West Bromwich High Street.

The bank branch invited the college to get involved alongside Barnardos on Track, Hope for Justice – highlighting



Students involved with the Kissing It Better charity at Sandwell and City Hospitals



A community event held at Santander based in West Bromwich High Street

modern day slavery, and TNCMC – raising awareness of the contribution of the Caribbean armed forces to the Commonwealth over the past century.

And Sandwell College recently held a community fun day to welcome local people to its Central Campus.

The summer fair was packed with a host of activities, including street theatre and music performances, a camper

van selfie booth and fairground rides for all the family. Principal Graham Pennington said: "This is our opportunity to give something back to the community and encourage people to further their career aspirations with information on course applications."

Enrolment for all courses starts on GCSE results day, August 24, and continues through to September.

Simple steps homeowners can take now to protect their assets.

Head of April King Legal Paul King explains why some homeowners are doing **too little, too late** to protect their hard-earned assets.

Care Cost Fees

"A lot of people are still unaware that if they need care in later life, their assets will be means-tested by the Local Authority to help pay for these services."

"The Local Authority will look to use the assets of a person until they get down to a lower limit of £14,250, when the Local Authority will take over the fees."

"For instance, my own grandmother sadly passed away recently at the age of 92. My grandfather had died many years earlier and left everything to her."

"When she needed care in the last six years of her life, because my grandfather had left everything to her, the house and all the estate was counted in the Local Authority's means test."

"Our clients tell us, 'We've worked hard all our lives, why should the Local Authority get it all?'"

"Just as she died, she had gone down to that lower limit of £14,250 and that's all her children inherited."

"There are many myths about the steps people can take to protect their assets from being used like this."

"The main one is that a parent should simply sign their house over to the children now, so it won't be taken into consideration for means testing. That's just not true."

"Local Authorities will actually look to see if you've 'deliberately deprived' yourself of an asset by giving property away, going back over any period in time."

"Sometimes people think that if the gift is made seven years prior then the house is safe. This is not so as the seven-year rule only applies to Inheritance Tax and not Local Authority care."

"The solution is for couples to simply not leave everything to each other in the first place."

"What my grandfather could have done is leave his half of the house in trust to his children, stating that they couldn't have it while his wife, my grandmother, was still alive. We call these Property Trust Wills."

"If my grandfather had left his half of the house in trust to the children then when my grandmother subsequently received care in her later life she would only have been means tested on her own half of the house, but my grandfather's half would have been safe."

"Why should he have to contribute his half when he didn't receive any care?"

"The important factor is that couples need to act in advance. Once one party dies or loses mental capacity, through a stroke for example, then they are no longer in a position to do this legitimate and straightforward type of planning."

"It is therefore important for couples to act now even if they may not foresee care fees being an issue."

Paul goes on to explain that most clients he sees are surprised to learn remarriage usually cancels a Will and makes the spouse next in line to inherit, ahead of their own children! Protecting your half of the house in this way, he suggests, ensures that your children ultimately inherit when the survivor dies.

"Had my grandmother remarried after the death of my grandfather the whole estate could have passed sideways out of the family," says Paul.

Lasting Power of Attorney

Paul explains how people often get confused thinking that, because they have made a Will, their executors can also deal with assets if there is illness, stroke or some other form of incapacity while they are still alive.

"Everyone should actually have two documents – a Will that deals with their estate on death, and a Lasting Power of Attorney that deals with their estate during their lifetime," he says.

"There are two types of Lasting Power of Attorney – one deals with finance, the other deals with health and welfare."

"In many ways it's similar to a passport; a document that's registered now and one which can be physically handed to the attorneys should the need arise."

"It allows the attorneys, perhaps the children, to deal with the banks and pension companies etc should their parent become incapacitated, but also to deal with matters such as where the parent should be living and how they should receive care."

"Your attorneys, again perhaps your children, must legally act in your best interests at all times."

"You can choose a number of attorneys to act, either jointly or independently, and April King advises on the various options available."

"Couples are often surprised to discover that even joint bank accounts can be frozen until the bank sees sight of a Lasting Power of Attorney document."

"Having a Lasting Power of Attorney removes the burden on children should ill health happen further down the line."

"It helps a family deal with bank accounts and so on during a parent's lifetime and ceases on death."

"Crucially, you have to complete a Lasting Power of Attorney while you are still in good mental health."

"If someone becomes ill through say, a stroke or dementia, this option is lost and the family would have to apply for a Deputyship Order from the Court of Protection – a drawn out and expensive process."

"It is therefore a good idea for clients to plan ahead and remove any future burden from the family."

"Once again, all adults should be thinking of this, particularly when there are children or a business involved."

"It's not just something to think about when you get older, that's the challenge for us."

"People think, 'I'm not ill, why do I need to make a Power of Attorney?' But they're missing the point. This is a document that has to be done in advance."



Paul King, Head of April King Legal

"The Lasting Power of Attorney remains in place until you die unless you want to cancel it."

"Once it's registered, you don't have to worry if you then develop some debilitating illness. A burden has been removed from the family at an already difficult time."

Bloodline Trust Wills

The majority of April King's clients have already made standard 'Mirror Wills' with other firms before approaching the Firm. A Mirror Will is when a couple leave everything to each other on the first death, then to the children when the second partner dies. But modern family life means these type of Wills leave a lot to chance.

Explains Paul: "If I have a Mirror Will leaving everything to my wife and she remarries or goes into care after my death then either the new husband or the Local Authority are likely to inherit most, if not all, of my estate ahead of my children."

"Even if my children are named in my Mirror Will, it is by no means certain that they will inherit anything."

"Once again, this is because a remarriage would cancel the Will my wife had previously made with me and make the new husband next-of-kin."

"This often comes as a big shock to my clients who had perhaps thought that all was in order and that the family bloodline would one day inherit."

"The same is true for thinking that their children and/or grandchildren will one day benefit under a Mirror Will."

"If any of your children should die leaving everything to their husband or wife and that son-in-law or daughter-in-law should then remarry, then your grandchildren would be the ones to lose out under the line of inheritance."

"Worse still, someone else's grandchildren would be in line to receive the benefit of all your years of hard work."

"I've experienced this in my own family and I'm sure most people have had similar experiences or heard of someone who has."

"Bloodline Trust Wills give greater protection to your children."

"These type of Wills not only give your children complete control and access to the inheritance they receive from you, they also grant added protection from the twists and turns of modern family life."

"The wording in these Wills states that any money left over on their demise must pass to any children born of them – your grandchildren."

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April King has prepared a free information pack for readers of the Halesowen Chronicle which is available by calling

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INSIDE

THEATRE + PUZZLES + TV GUIDE + MORE

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Loyalty

The pub itself boasts a wide range of ciders, lagers, wines and spirits including four 'Real Ales' which they rotate weekly. Regulars very often enjoy ales such as Bathams, AJ Ales, Oakham, JHB, Stairway To Heaven and MA Pardoes Entire, plus many more!

The pub also run a loyalty scheme which means customers can get 10p back on their card for every pound they spend.

A pub spokesman added: "With a juke box and free WIFI to compliment the regular entertainment every Friday, customers cannot ask for much more from a local pub!"

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Deborah's Led a life less ordinary

She hails from one of the greatest rock families of them all. Rock'n'blues singer Deborah Bonham grew up as her big brother, John, was becoming the greatest drummer in music history. The Led Zeppelin powerhouse was fast, powerful and had his own distinctive groove. Though he died at the tragically young age of 32, he left a legacy that lasts to this day.

Deborah was eight or nine when Led Zeppelin started to take off. And she imagined that his 'job' – of touring the world, recording number one hit records and having fans fall at your feet – was perfectly normal. As you would, at the age of nine.

"Where John's talent came from, nobody can say. I think it's something you are born with. From the age of two or three, he was bashing pots and pans. When it took off for them, I was so young. I grew up with it. I grew up in the thick of it. I just thought that was a normal way of life. I thought you made an album and it went straight to number one.

"Believe me, I later learnt that was not always the case. But I was very young when he joined Led Zeppelin. I was only six or seven. I had a false understanding of the music industry to be fair. But I always knew I wanted to sing."

Not that John – or, indeed, Deborah's mother and father – wanted her to follow in her illustrious brother's footsteps. "It wasn't something my brother or mum and dad wanted me to happen. Especially after seeing what the industry was like, with John. He was right too. It wasn't any place that he wanted his kid sister to be.

"So I did a bit of opera singing to start with. But I just loved blues/rock. And I love performing live. I was always going to do it. You can't deny what's in your heart."

Her parents encouraged her to succeed at school instead of pursuing her improbable dreams of being a rock singer. She took their advice, to a point. "One great thing I did was learn to speak French at school. I sort of stuck with it and now, for me, one of the best places to tour is France. I often think of my brother and mum and dad telling me to stop at school and learn and I think of how I mastered French because, of course, it paid off. Except I use the language to help me sing the blues."

Deborah, who hails from Redditch, is back on her old stomping ground soon with a headline gig coming up at Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms on September 22. It's her second in the region in recent times. Back in May she headlined Birmingham's Symphony Hall with Paul Rodgers, the former Free vocalist who also sang with Queen. The Paul Rodgers gigs were a blast and Deborah is looking forward to being back in the West Midlands.

"I'm really excited about it. I can't remember the last time I played Wolverhampton, it was many years ago. I love it up there. Any chance I get to come and play up there is great. We did Symphony Hall with Paul Rodgers and that was one of the most amazing gigs."

She used to spend most of her life in the Black Country, hanging out with bands and watching gigs.

"We always used to come over. I saw Slade. I remember seeing them at the Wulfrun Hall and they were bloody brilliant. They were a real rocking band."

She also played a gig when

Singing the blues – Deborah Bonham returns to the Slade Rooms



'Uncle' Robert Plant turned up to do a duet – much to the surprise of fans. That was at Huntingdon Hall, in Worcester, not far from Robert's Kidderminster home.

"Singing with Robert Plant, given our family's history with Led Zeppelin, was a massive moment. Robert's been like a brother or uncle to me. That was at Huntingdon Hall. He turned up and got up to sing with me, unbeknownst to the audience. That was a high moment. When things like that happen, it's an honour isn't it."

"But there's been a lot of amazing moments in my life. Every day I think how lucky I've been. I was a big fan of one of the all time greatest female vocalists, Ann Peebles, who had a hit with I Can't Stand The Rain. We ended up doing something together, a few shows, and we recorded a version of Can't Stand The Rain."

"I've been extremely blessed because I've had the joy of playing with the most incredible people. To get up on stage with Humble Pie, when they reformed with Peter Frampton, was incredible and I guess the Paul Rodgers thing was another recent highlight."

Deborah has other memories of Wolverhampton – and not all of them musical. Like so many Midlands rock stars, she's a fan of Wolverhampton Wanderers and has enjoyed seeing them play.

"It's the home

Singing with Robert Plant, given our family's history, was a massive moment

ground of Wolverhampton Wanderers and I've got to say I'm a fan. I went to the Wolves on one occasion to see them play Liverpool. We thrashed them. We stopped off at those Bathams pubs on the way for a drink. Everybody thought we'd get thrashed but I think we must have put five passed them that day."

She's grateful for the way her life turned out and says she owes much of her success to growing up with John and the rest of her family in a musical household.

"I guess my mom and dad were very musical. My mom always sang a little, not seriously but, but she loved good music. They were fans of the big bands like Count Basie. That was pretty much John's focus too. My dad loved all the black soul divas like Lena Horne and Mahalia Jackson. He would play a lot of that music. I grew up listening to that. Both my brothers, John and Michael, got into the Motown stuff, as well as the rock. It was a real eclectic house. I was listening to Jimi Hendrix and Joplin and all of that, CSN and Fleetwood Mac, but I was also steeped in the British movement and The Kinks. Then Zeppelin took off and everything changed."

● Tickets are available from the venue.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

Parquet Courts – album and tour



Holding Courts on matters of the heart

New York art rockers Parquet Courts follow their latest album *Human Performance* with a UK visit including a gig at Birmingham's O2 Institute next Thursday, August 31.

The band, who have a sound akin to Beck, Talking Heads and Franz Ferdinand, have released fifth album *Human Performance*, their second via Rough Trade.

Whereas other Parquet Courts albums were recorded in days or weeks, for *Human Performance* the band took an entire year and it's the first LP that finds all four band members contributing songs.

The album brings sonic experimentation and melodic introspection to matters of the heart, matters of humanity, of identity. "I told you I loved you, did I even deserve it when you returned it?" singer/guitarist

Andrew Savage wonders on the title track. It's also their most pop-oriented collection yet, coming only months after the release of the largely instrumental *Monastic Living* EP, that was made at the same time.

Across six years, four full-length albums, and two EPs, Parquet Courts have littered their lyrics with question marks. If previous album 2014's *Content Nausea* – with Savage and Austin Brown recording as *Parkay Quarts* – looked at anxiety in the age of big data, then on *Human Performance* the question marks get turned on themselves.

"There is a lot of darkness, and general anguish being worked out on this record," Brown adds. "But it ends kind of peacefully, kind of accepting that you can't do much about it."

Cole gets a kick out of comedy venture



Comedy fans will be able to get their kicks at Walsall Football Club in a forthcoming feast of laughter.

The Just For Kicks show, to be staged at the Banks's Stadium on October 27, is the mastermind of Wednesbury-born comic Jonny Cole, pictured. It will feature TV comics Joe Lycett, from Birmingham, and Phoenix Nights' Archie Kelly alongside Dudley's Wayne Beese.

Cole is the driving force and he hopes to make it a regular feature. The former diesel salesman has

emerged as an unstoppable musical-comedy force since his re-workings of well-known tunes have proved popular with audiences all over Britain. He was a headline act on the UK tour of A Black Country Night Out and has been a regular on local radio shows. He has even had a local beer named Fat Face in his honour by Stourbridge-based Sadler's Brewery.

Cole said: "I'm really excited about this venture and hopefully it will become an on-going thing. The football club are right behind me and have given me the freedom to deliver a great night to remember. Even my family want to come to this

one. Both Joe Lycett and Archie Kelly are big names on TV and it will be great for people to get to see them on the same bill in such a fantastic venue."

Lycett is currently working on new material for a national tour next year and has appeared on TV shows including *Live At The Apollo*, *Taskmaster* and *Sunday Brunch*.

Early bird tickets at £14 are available from Walsall Football Club on 01922 651416 or eticketing.co.uk/walsallfc.

For further information contact Jonny Cole on 07376 248521 or Wayne Thomas on 07551 170675.

Bold as brass at the Grand Theatre

Musicians and actors were in the wings last night (Wednesday) poised to deliver the first in-house production Wolverhampton Grand Theatre for 40 years. Brassed Off sees director Gareth Tudor Price working with professional and local amateur actors and musicians



on the story of a pit band going for glory in a national brass band competition. *Hi-de-Hi!* star Jeffrey Holland, pictured, plays ex-miner and conductor, Danny. The play runs to September 2.

Get into the swing with vintage sounds

Fans of big band swing and jive dancing can get vintage kicks at Symphony Hall Birmingham this bank holiday Sunday when the prestigious concert hall is turned into a 1930s style ballroom.

Retro sounds will be heard when the Jim Wynn Swing Orchestra get their joint jumping with arrangements from such as Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman. The Swing Era will perform high-energy Lindy Hop routines after, earlier in the day, offering swing dance lessons at the venue's Ever-After Vintage Tea Dance. The event will also feature the Sugarfoot Stomp DJs. Tickets for the evening concert cost £22.50 to £27.50 and admission to the 11am and 2pm tea dance sessions are £12.50 to £18. No partners required but vintage dress encouraged. See thsh.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.

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Discover The Windsor Castle Inn's hidden gin bar



Recently celebrating 10 years success, the Sadler family have created a unique and independent public house in the heart of the Black Country.

Now owned by Emily Sadler & husband Gareth, their passion & dedication to providing a top quality & unique customer experience has transgressed The Windsor Castle into the iconic Sadler's Tap House.



Serving up to 10 Sadler's craft ales at any one time, aside fresh, seasonal food created by head chef Andre Pelaud and his 5 star kitchen team, creating sophisticated twists on Black Country favorites plus fresh fish & seafood dishes, top quality steaks and grills, The Windsor Castle aim to exceed expectations through their focus on quality. From produce to service attention to detail is their focus.

Awarded four stars from Visit England, The Windsor Castle boast four small yet perfectly presented bedrooms for you to rest your head. Emily & Gareth refurbished the upstairs space at The Windsor Castle into bed & breakfast facilities in 2013, 'I love for guests to stay with us so they get to enjoy the full Windsor Castle experience, the longer you are here, the better experience we can provide. We genuinely get so much satisfaction from happy customers leaving us great feedback and especially when we have customers who return again & again we know we have succeeded.'



The Windsor Castles history dates back to 1900, then situated in Oldbury attached to the original Windsor Castle Brewery, home to Sadler's ales. Emily's grandfather, Jack Sadler born at the brewery passed his knowledge and passion of brewing on to his son John Sadler who re-opened the brewery in Lye in 2004 and bought the family tradition back to life. It has since gone

from strength to strength and the Sadler's brand is something they are extremely proud of at The Windsor Castle.

With the Sadler family not being one to stand still, the summer has bought the latest venture to their portfolio... Nestled away on the top floor at The Windsor Castle, if you know where to look, you'll find Dr Hardwicke's Gin Emporium. Their 1920's inspired art deco gin emporium boasts 40+ different and exciting gins & welcomes gin lovers with open arms to sample not just the gins themselves but also learn a little of this wonderful spirit's fascinating story. You can enjoy some of the finest of the English distilleries and the best rest of the world has to offer in a bespoke serve. Be adventurous or try their recommendations, there is certainly something for everyone. Dr Hardwicke's Gin Emporium is the perfect place to enjoy pre dinner drinks or relax in comfortable surroundings with friends for a 'gintastic' evening. With them now running popular gin tasting and cocktail masterclass experiences and soon we will be opening their own gin school where you can enjoy the unique opportunity of spending a day with their gin guru learning, tasting & creating your own individual

gin recipe. Dr Hardwicke's Gin Emporium is the perfect setting for a private party, simply hire the room for a buffet and drinks party or they can create tailor made gin tasting packages for private parties.



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CHOICE



Festival Tales: Edinburgh at 70 (BBC2, 9pm)
Jack Whitehall traces the history of the Edinburgh Festival, as the annual event reaches its 70th anniversary. First conceived in 1947 as part of the 'healing process' for a Britain emerging from the misery and austerity of the Second World War, the Festival was considered a bastion of idealism, and the Fringe was brought into existence in the same year, bringing with it a form of creative anarchy. Jack reflects on the many ground-breaking encounters between artists, musicians, writers and performers that the Edinburgh Festival has facilitated over the years, and examines the role it has played in revolutionising art and culture both in the UK and abroad.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's British Food Adventure. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Diamond League Athletics: Zurich Highlights. **2.00** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League Final. Wigan Warriors v Hull FC (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.30** Plog It! (R) **6.30** **BBC News.** **6.40** **Regional Programme.** **6.45** **Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme.** Nina Wadia, Gareth Malone, Vikki Stone and Ore Oduba help a pair of would-be poets battle through four rounds of rhyme-based challenges. **7.20** **Pointless Celebrities.** Lizzie Webb, Chris Steele, Robin Cousins, Rosemary Conley, Iwan Thomas, Katharine Merry, Dr Dawn Harper and Dr Pixie McKenna compete in a "health and fitness" edition of the quiz. (R) **8.05** **Who Dares Wins.** Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject. Last in the series. **8.45** **Casualty.** Part two of two. The team of Holby medics continue their efforts to help migrant refugees in need of medical attention on the French coast. However, Dylan is fast becoming frustrated with how little he can offer the camp, and makes a decision he may come to regret. Meanwhile, back in the UK, Jez faces the repercussions of crossing paths with the Ellissons, as an improvised explosive is thrown through the window of his home, placing both Robyn and baby Charlotte in jeopardy. **9.35** **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Dermot's pre-marriage nerves get the better of him, so he locks himself away in a cupboard. Rory's secret is revealed to his mother. (R) **10.05** **BBC News:** Weather: National Lottery Update. **10.25** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester United v Leicester City and Bournemouth v Manchester City. **11.55** **People Just Do Nothing.** **12.25** **Film:** In the Electric Mist. (2009) **2.15** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 Coast. (R) **7.20** **Film:** The Man in the White Suit. (1951) **8.45** **Film:** The Magnificent Ambersons. (1942) **10.10** **Homes Under the Hammer.** (R) **10.55** **Natural World:** Beavers Behaving Badly. (R) **11.55** **Film:** Bedknobs and Broomsticks. (1971) **1.50** Wanted Down Under. (R) **2.20** Mastermind. (R) **2.50** Only Connect. (R) **3.20** Gardeners' World. (R) **4.20** Final Score. **5.20** University Challenge. (R) **5.50** The Big Family Cooking Showdown. Culinary competition, hosted by Zoe Ball and Nadiya Hussain. (R) **6.50** **Proms Extra.** Katie Derham Soweto Kinch and John Butt review Bach's St John's Passion from Prom 49, and the Charles Mingus Prom, featuring Kandace Springs, Shabaka Hutchings and Christian Scott. **7.30** **Nina Conti's Edinburgh Festival.** The comedian and ventriloquist showcases some highlights of the festival, chatting to Irvine Welsh about his show Performers and meeting poet and musician Benjamin Clementine. **8.00** **Iolo's Great Welsh Parks.** Nature expert Iolo Williams visits Padarn Country Park near Llanberis in Snowdonia, hoping to see the likes of ring ouzel, wood warblers and pied flycatchers. **8.30** **Dad's Army.** Walker is caught smuggling Italian POWs out of camp at night, but far from being a traitor, he is furthering the war effort – and making some money on the side. (R) **9.00** **Festival Tales: Edinburgh at 70.** Jack Whitehall reflects on the history of the Edinburgh Festival, and the role it has played in revolutionising art and culture on an international scale. **10.00** **Performance Live: Get a Round.** A trio of friends hell-bent on having a good time, wonder whether a big night out can save the world. Theatrical comedy, starring Sara Cocker, Lowri Evans and Leonie Higgins. **10.40** **Film: The Help.** (2011) An aspiring journalist in 1960s Mississippi creates controversy by giving black servants the chance to tell their stories. Drama, starring Emma Stone and Viola Davis. **1.00** **Film:** The German Doctor. (2013) Fact-based drama, starring Alex Brendemuhl. **2.25** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV Racing: The Opening Show. **10.20** Gok's Lunchbox. (R) **11.15** 1000 Heartbeats. (R) **12.15** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** The Chase. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing Live: York Ebor Festival. The fourth and final day of the festival. **3.55** Tipping Point. (R) **4.55** Little Big Shots USA. **5.50** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.00** **ITV News:** Weather. **6.15** **You've Been Framed!** Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring everything from giddy grandmas, cute kids and crazy animals to below-the-belt mishaps, practical jokers and painful-looking accidents. (R) **7.15** **Catchphrase.** Amanda Tollan, Manish Mehta and Charlotte Myers set out to prove they can "see it and say it" as Stephen Mulhern challenges them to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000. (R) **8.00** **Les Dawson Forever.** Martin Clunes narrates a profile of the comedian, in which his daughter Charlotte Dawson examines the roots of her father's rise to fame. Roy Barraclough reveals how he and Dawson created some of their most famous comic creations, while Rick Wakeman reveals the secrets behind the comedian's trademark routines of deliberately off-key piano playing. **10.00** **ITV News:** Weather. **10.15** **Film: Captain Phillips.** (2013) The captain of a cargo ship travelling around the coast of Somalia is taken hostage when pirates raid the vessel. Fact-based thriller, starring Tom Hanks and Barkhad Abdi. **12.45** Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Mobil 1 The Grid. **6.30** Motor Sport: Caterham. **7.00** Motor Sport: British Rally Championship. **7.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.50** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.20** Frasier. (R) **8.50** Frasier. (R) **9.20** Frasier. (R) **9.55** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Practice 3 Live. Lee McKenzie presents coverage from Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. **11.25** F1 Meets David Coulthard. **11.55** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Qualifying Live. Coverage of the qualifying session at Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. (Start-time 1.00pm). **2.30** World's Most Expensive Cars. **3.35** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.35** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R) **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **6.55** **Film: Ender's Game.** (2013) In the future, the human race has survived conflict with an alien race, but the prospect of war breaking out again is a constant threat. A gifted boy is selected as a potential military commander for the coming conflict, and subjected to a gruelling training program to prove his worth. Sci-fi adventure based on Orson Scott Card's novel, starring Asa Butterfield, Harrison Ford and Ben Kingsley. Edited for violence. **9.00** **Film: Dumb and Dumber To.** (2014) Premiere. Dim-witted friends Harry and Lloyd are reunited after 20 years. When Harry discovers he has a daughter he never knew about, he breaks his friend out of a psychiatric hospital and they go on a road trip with the intention of fulfilling parental responsibilities neither of them is capable of. Comedy sequel, starring Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels. **11.10** **Film: Ted.** (2012) A boy's magical living teddy remains his friend into adulthood, creating tension with his girlfriend. Comedy, starring Mark Wahlberg, with the voice of Seth MacFarlane. **1.10** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Gordon Ramsay revisits three restaurants he tried to save. (R) **2.00** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Darren plans to take Shane down, Mandy panics over a letter from social services and Brody sabotages Scott's plans. **4.10** Location, Location, Location. Phil Spencer heads to Nottinghamshire to help find a home for a couple who have spent most of their relationship living with their parents. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.10** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Animals Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors: Rookies and Raids. (R) **1.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **2.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **3.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **6.00** **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** The enforcement agents try to mediate a dispute in a takeaway, and deal with rent evaders living in potentially deadly conditions. Plus, a businessman faces financial ruin. (R) **7.00** **Cricket on 5.** England v West Indies. Highlights of the second day of the Second Test in the three-match series, which takes place at Headingley. With commentary and analysis from Mark Nicholas, Michael Vaughan, Geoffrey Boycott and Simon Hughes. **8.00** **Supernatural Nazis.** New series. The role of occultism in Nazi Germany, revealing how religion and the supernatural were used in Hitler's pursuit of power. The first programme examines how the Nazis corrupted the teachings of Christianity to influence people to see Hitler as a messiah figure, and examines accusations that the Pope did too little to oppose them. **8.55** **5 News Weekend.** **9.00** **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray presents highlights from the latest games in the Championship, which included Bristol City v Aston Villa at Ashton Gate, Nottingham Forest v Leeds United at The City Ground, and Middlesbrough v Preston North End at Riverside Stadium. **10.00** **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, which included Rochdale v Bury, Wigan Athletic v Portsmouth, Mansfield Town v Luton Town, and Yeovil Town v Coventry City. **10.30** **Britain's Favourite Abba Songs.** A countdown of the Swedish pop group's 20 most popular songs, with celebrity fans including Jane McDonald and Liz McAlarnon introducing their favourite clips. (R) **12.00** **Access.** **12.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** Delete. **4.30** Access. (R) **4.40** Great Scientists. (R) **5.10** Nick's Quest. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four **7.00** The Brain with David Eagleman **8.00** Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.45** Top of the Pops: 1984 **11.15** Billy Fury: The Sound of Fury **12.45** Britain's Most Fragile Treasure **1.45** The World's Most Expensive Stolen Paintings **2.45** Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures **3.45** Close **ITV2** **12.35** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **1.05** You've Been Framed and Famous! **2.10** **Film:** Honey (2003) **3.10** FYI Daily **3.15** **Film:** Honey (2003) **4.05** **Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10** **Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.55** **Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **6.55** FYI Daily **7.00** **Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **8.00** **Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05** **Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **10.10** **Film:** Family Guy **12.05** American Dad! **1.05** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **2.05** Total! Bonkers Guinness World Records: Bunkingly Big Hits **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **2.50** **Film:** Casablanca (1942) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55** **Film:** Casablanca (1942) **4.55** **Film:** The Queen (2006) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00** **Film:** The Queen (2006) **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Foyle's War **11.05** Law & Order: UK **1.05** Wycliffe **2.00** Rising Damp **2.25** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV4** **11.50** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **12.50** Minder **1.50** The Professionals **2.50** The Darts Show **3.15** World Series of Darts: Perth **7.15** Women's Rugby World Cup 2017 **11.50** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **11.15** **Film:** The Krays (1990) **12.20** FYI Daily **12.25** **Film:** The Krays (1990) **1.40** Minder **2.45** Sporting Funnies **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **11.05** Don't Tell the Bride **12.05** Streetmate **1.05** The Goldbergs **2.35** The Big Bang Theory **6.45** **Film:** Shallow Hal (2001) **9.00** **Film:** Immortals (2011) **11.10** Gogglebox **1.15** Tattoo Fixers **2.20** Rude Tube **3.15** Gogglebox **4.05** How I Met Your Mother **4.55** Rude(ish) Tube **Film4** **11.00** The Dark Crystal (1982) **1.00** Chalet Girl (2011) **2.50** The Cat in the Hat (2003) **4.25** Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters (2013) **6.40** About Time (2013) **9.00** Lucy (2014) **10.40** The Guest (2014) **12.40** Taxi Driver (1976) **3.00** Close



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CHOICE



Tom Burke (left)

Strike – The Cuckoo's Calling (BBC1, 9.05pm)

New series. Supermodel Lula Landry falls to her death from a Mayfair balcony and the police conclude that she committed suicide, but Lula's adoptive brother John Bristow believes she was murdered and that key evidence has been overlooked. He calls upon private investigator Cormoran Strike to examine the death further and the penniless and effectively homeless PI takes the case. Crime thriller based on books written by JK Rowling under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith, starring Tom Burke and Holliday Grainger. The second episode will be shown tomorrow.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Fake or Fortune? (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Songs of Praise. **4.35** Film: Toy Story 2. (1999) Animated sequel, with the voice of Tom Hanks.

6.05 BBC News.

6.20 Regional Programme.

6.30 **Countryfile.** Ellie Harrison and Steve Brown present the show from the Llyn Peninsula on Wales' North West coast. Ellie explores the seagrass habitat and joins a marine conservation project studying the region's fish, while Steve meets dairy farmers who deliver their milk door to door and invents a new flavour of ice cream.

7.30 **Diana, 7 Days.** Documentary exploring the week following Princess Diana's death, with first-hand accounts from those who found themselves at the centre of the ensuing events, including then prime minister Tony Blair, members of the royal household, and family members including Princes William and Harry.

9.05 **Strike – The Cuckoo's Calling.** New series. Private detective Cormoran Strike is called in to investigate the apparent suicide of a supermodel. Crime thriller based on books by JK Rowling, starring Tom Burke. The second episode will be shown tomorrow.

10.05 BBC News.

10.25 Regional Programme.

10.35 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Liverpool v Arsenal at Anfield, Chelsea v Everton at Stamford Bridge, Tottenham Hotspur v Burnley at White Hart Lane and West Bromwich Albion v Stoke City at the Hawthorns. The fixture at Anfield was an early chance for the Reds and Gunners to test themselves against another of the leading contenders, while Chelsea continued their title defence against the much-changed Toffees.

11.45 **Live at the Apollo.** Leading performers on the stand-up circuit share their light-hearted views on modern life. (R)

12.30 Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.00** Garden Rescue. (R) **7.45** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.15** Countryfile. (R) **10.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.45** Lorraine's Fast, Fresh and Easy Food. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Coast. (R) **1.45** Triathlon World Series: Stockholm. **3.30** Equestrian: European Championships.

6.00 **Tribes, Predators & Me.** Gordon Buchanan joins a group of Bushmen in Botswana's Kalahari Desert to learn their ancient secrets for surviving on foot among wild lions. They teach him how to make fire, find honey, and gather water from desert plants, and the filmmaker watches as they hunt with poisoned arrows and track predatory lions. (R)

7.00 **Gordon Buchanan: Elephant Family & Me.** The first of two programmes in which Gordon Buchanan encounters a family of African elephants in the wilds of Kenya, and attempts to gain their trust so he can observe them up close in their natural habitat. He enlists the aid of an expert from the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust to learn about their behaviour as he follows an elephant with a new calf, and discovers what it takes for the youngest of the world's largest land animals to survive in the face of a challenging environment. (R)

8.00 **Dragons' Den.** The panel cast an eye over plans for furniture made from old aeroplane parts, organic dog treats, healthy snacks and a company that buys and sells books. Presented by Evan Davis.

9.00 **Astronauts: Do You Have What It Takes?** The candidates are put through more demanding tests as they are pushed to their limits in a simulated emergency splashdown.

10.00 **III Behaviour.** Charlie is assumed to have committed suicide. Joel decides to visit Kira so he can comfort her, and finds himself enjoying taking over his friend's role in the family.

11.00 **Film: The Ides of March.** (2011) A presidential campaign worker must decide where his loyalties lie as dark secrets come to light. Drama, directed by and starring George Clooney.

12.35 **Film: Echoes from the Dead.** (2013) **2.10** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.05** Holly City. (R) **4.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Ninjago: Rebooted. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Film: K-9. (1989) **11.15** Love Your Garden. (R) **12.15** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **12.55** Joanna Lumley's Postcards. (R) **1.25** Catchphrase. (R) **2.10** Long Lost Family. (R) **3.10** Bear Grylls Survival School. (R) **3.40** **Film: Superman.** (1978) Comic-strip adventure, starring Christopher Reeve.

6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.40 ITV News: Weather.

7.00 **Possibly the Best Adverts in the World.** Hugh Dennis narrates a two-hour special in which celebrities select their favourite commercials from TV and the internet in a range of categories. Bill Bailey chooses adverts for food, Fay Ripley introduces health and beauty, Angus Deayton focuses on cars, Chris Ramsey looks at sweets, Joe Lycett tackles toys, and Chris Kamara looks back at cigarettes and alcohol.

9.05 **Victoria.** New series. The second series of the drama about the early years of Queen Victoria's reign begins after the birth of her first child. She resumes her royal duties sooner than expected, and quickly becomes convinced that her husband and the prime minister are concealing troubling news about the conflict in Afghanistan, and turns to the Duke of Wellington for answers. Victoria also faces problems at home, as Albert's family descend on the palace for the christening, and continue to make plans for the future of the monarchy.

10.10 ITV News: Weather.

10.20 **Judge Rinder's Crime Stories.** Barrister Robert Rinder reveals how the parents of a teenager killed by a speeding car campaigned for a change in the law that had allowed the driver to escape justice. (R)

11.20 **5 Gold Rings.** Game show, hosted by Phillip Schofield. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** British Superbike Championship Highlights. **4.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Para Triathlon: Superhero Tri. **7.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Frasier. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live Build Up. Steve Jones presents a preview of the 12th round of the season. **12.35** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live. Coverage of the 12th round of the season (Start-time 1.00pm). **3.10** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live Reaction. **4.00** The Crystal Maze. (R) **5.00** Channel 4 News. **5.30** 50 Greatest Kids Films.

7.00 **Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year.** George Clarke presents the Pubs and Entertainment and Unexpected categories. Unusual structures featured include a hedgehog rescue centre, a West Country whisky den, a recreation of the Jedis from Doctor Who, and the UK's smallest cathedral.

8.00 **From Russia to Iran: Crossing the Wild Frontier.** Levison Wood travels into the badlands of Dagestan, an area the foreign office warns against visiting. He experiences the hospitality of the local warrior clans and takes a journey on horseback to the ancient city of Derbent – with an armed guide to fend off wolves and bears. He then moves on to Azerbaijan, a country where extreme wealth exists alongside subsistence poverty.

9.00 **Film: Taken 3.** (2014) Premiere. Ex-CIA agent Bryan Mills' efforts to finally live a quiet life are shattered by the death of his ex-wife. Just when things seemingly can't get any worse, he is framed for her murder and must fight to clear his name. Action thriller sequel, starring Liam Neeson.

11.15 **Film: The Wolf of Wall Street.** (2013) A New York stockbroker rises from unemployment to become one of the richest men in the city's financial elite through an illegal scheme to defraud investors. His wealth brings him an outrageously debauched lifestyle, but comes at a price as the FBI become suspicious of his manipulation of the markets. Fact-based drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

2.30 Speed with Guy Martin. Guy tries to cross the English Channel on a flying bicycle. (R) **3.55** Gillette World Sport. **4.25** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **4.50** Mobil 1 The Grid. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Poppy Cat. **6.10** Little Princess. (R) **6.25** Mr Men. **6.35** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.55** Wipper. (R) **7.05** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.30** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.35** Floogals. (R) **8.50** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.15** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **10.10** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.40** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Toddlers Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **1.00** Puppies Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **2.00** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 3. (R) **3.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **4.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **5.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R)

6.00 **All New Traffic Cops.** An intoxicated driver heads the wrong way down the A1 near Leeds. (R) **7.00** Cricket on 5. England v West Indies.

8.00 **Can't I Pay? We'll Take It Away.** Agents Stewart and Ian head to Manchester, where a landlord is owed £8,000 in rent arrears and has already called for police back-up. Meanwhile, Brian and Del chase £3,000. (R)

8.55 **5 News Weekend.**

9.00 **Funny Women: The Mel & Sue Story.** Profile of entertainers Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins, who have become famed for their irreverent, raised-eyebrow humour and cheeky innuendo. Both hailing from south London, Mel and Sue met at Cambridge and like so many others, honed their self-effacing double act on the stages of Edinburgh before breaking into TV fronting the Channel 4's daytime chat show Light Lunch. While at one point Mel came close to bankruptcy, the duo's luck was in when, in 2010, they were asked to host an unlikely sounding new show called The Great British Bake Off. Its enormous – though unexpected – success established them as top-of-the-game presenting talent.

10.30 **Sue Perkins' Comedy Greats: The Entertainers.** **12.20** Named and Shamed: Greatest Celebrity Scandals. (R) **1.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** Delete.

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 BBC Proms 2017: Chopin Preludes **9.00** Gluck: Who Did She Think He Was? **10.00** Metal at the BBC **10.30** Muse @ Reading Festival 2017 **12.00** Queen: From Fags to Rhapsody **1.00** Jeff Lynne's ELO in Concert **2.00** Metal at the BBC **2.30** Gluck: Who Did She Think He Was? **3.30** Close

ITV2

12.00 Ninja Warrior UK **1.00** Mr Bean **2.05** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.40** Totally You've Been Framed! Gold **3.40** Film: Around the World in 80 Days (2004) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45** Film: Around the World in 80 Days (2004) **6.00** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **7.00** FYI Daily **7.05** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **7.55** FYI Daily: Pacific Rim (2013) **8.55** FYI Daily **9.00** Film: Pacific Rim (2013) **10.30** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.25** The Cleveland Show **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.25 Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35** Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **1.15** Foyle's War **3.15** Royal Stories **3.50** Rosemary & Thyme **4.55** Film: The Young Victoria (2009) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00** Film: The Young Victoria (2009) **7.00** Lewis **9.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05** Film: The English Patient (1996) **1.05** FYI Daily **1.10** Film: The English Patient (1996) **2.55** Wycliffe **3.50** The Darling Buds of May **4.45** Rising Damp **5.10** On the Buses **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV4

5.45 British Touring Cars – Crashes and Smashes **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **8.00** World Series of Darts: Perth **12.10** Film: Clear and Present Danger (1994) **1.00** FYI Daily **1.05** Film: Clear and Present Danger (1994) **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 Made in Chelsea: Ibiza **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** Streetmate **2.05** Film: Muppet Treasure Island (1996) **4.05** The Goldbergs **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Predators (2010) **11.05** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **12.10** Don't Tell the Bride **1.15** Body Fivers **2.20** Gogglebox **3.15** Rude Tube **Film4** **11.00** Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World (2011) **1.00** Ever After: A Cinderella Story (1998) **3.25** Mrs Doubtfire (1993) **5.50** Avatar (2009) **9.00** The World's End (2013) **11.10** An American Werewolf in London (1981) **1.05** The Warriors (1979) **3.00** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

The Theory of Everything, ITV, 9pm

Biopic of Stephen Hawking, exploring the renowned astrophysicist's romance with future wife Jane during their time at university in the 1960s and his initial diagnosis with motor neurone disease, which doctors believed would lead to his death within two years. Undaunted by deteriorating health, he continued his groundbreaking research into the origins of the universe. Starring an Oscar-winning Eddie Redmayne, with Felicity Jones and David Thewlis. (2014)

TUESDAY

Bedtime Stories, BBC2, 2pm

A downtrodden handyman is forced to look after his niece and nephew. He soon wins them over with his knack for telling exciting stories, but to their surprise the tall tales start coming true – and as the children make their own suggestions, the results become even more incredible. Fantasy comedy, starring Adam Sandler, Keri Russell and Russell Brand. (2008)



The Theory of Everything, Monday, ITV, 9pm

WEDNESDAY

The Muppets, BBC2, 1.45pm

Three fans of the famous puppet variety show discover a powerful businessman is going to knock down the Muppet theatre and drill for oil on the site. They track down frontman Kermit the frog and persuade him to reunite his co-stars, so they can put on one last performance to save the venue. Comedy, starring Jason Segel. (2011)

THURSDAY

Badge of Betrayal, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman discovers her supposedly dead son is still alive, his demise having been faked by her ex-husband as part of an elaborate plot to destroy her life. However, finding the evidence to prove her story turns out to be a difficult challenge. Thriller, starring Julie Benz and Samantha Ferris. (2014)

FRIDAY

The Box, BBC1, 12.10am

A couple receive a box that will make them rich at the press of a button – but if they do so, someone will die. Sci-fi thriller, with Cameron Diaz and James Marsden. (2009)

Margaret reveals all about her life in the spotlight

American drama The Handmaid's Tale made its UK television debut on Channel 4 in May and became one of the biggest successes of the year, receiving 13 Emmy nominations before being renewed for a second season set to air in 2018.

Based on the 1985 book of the same name, the show imagines a future in which nuclear war has left a large percentage of the human population infertile and young women are forced to sleep with powerful men called Leaders and bear their children.

The young women – known as Handmaids – are assigned to the men and are essentially raped, in warped rituals involving the Leaders' wives, in a bid to fall pregnant and continue the human race.

The story is told through the eyes of a Handmaid called Offred (played by Elisabeth Moss) and switches between the present horror she is living in and the past, as the world starts to tumble into the chaos and disorder that has led

to a totalitarian regime.

Perhaps one of the reasons the dark drama has been so successful is that many feel the subject matter is incredibly prescient given the Donald Trump administration, the feminism movement and the instability of the world.

Indeed, the book's author, Canadian Margaret Atwood has claimed that the 2016 US Presidential Election led to an increase in sales of The Handmaid's Tale even before the success of the aforementioned TV adaptation.

Atwood's star is now shining brighter than ever, but her success is not only down to this one novel – for decades she has been universally acclaimed as Canada's greatest living writer.

She is a winner of the Arthur C Clarke Award and Prince of Asturias Award for Literature, and has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize five times, winning once for her historical novel The Blind Assassin.

In 2001, she was inducted into

Canada's Walk of Fame and is also a founder of the Writers' Trust of Canada, a non-profit literary organisation that seeks to encourage Canada's writing community.

Atwood is also an inventor, and has developed the LongPen that facilitates the remote robotic writing of documents.

While she is best known for her work as a novelist, she has also published 15 books of poetry, many of her pieces inspired by myths and fairytales, which have been interests of hers from an early age.

And her upbringing is one of the key topics up for discussion when the writer and activist meets up with Alan Yentob in Toronto for tonight's Imagine.

Atwood explains how a childhood spent between the wilderness of northern Quebec and the city helped shape her vision of herself and the world, set alight her imagination and set her forth on a path to literary success.



Imagine – Margaret Atwood: You Have Been Warned!, Monday, BBC1, 10.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Jamie's Quick & Easy Food Channel 4, 8pm

There's a common consensus that we are now more time-challenged than ever before. Gone are the days when we can invest time in making big meals for our family and friends – instead we want food that is quick and easy to make, as well as tasty and healthy. According to Jamie Oliver: 'Sometimes the simplest things are the best' and in this series he is using just five ingredients to create a selection of delicious stress-free recipes. On the menu tonight are sesame seared tuna, a messy meatball bun and chocolate rye cookies. Then, to round things off, Jamie prepares the comforting classic, chicken pot pie, and shares his quick-and-easy tips on how to make the perfect crispy crust.

TUESDAY

The Great British Bake Off Channel 4, 8pm

It's back – but with a new recipe. Mary Berry, Sue Perkins and Mel Giedroyc famously decided not to follow the show when it moved to Channel 4, so now Sandi Toksvig and Noel Fielding are taking over the presenting duties, while Prue Leith steps in as judge. But there's still a tent, Paul Hollywood and, in this first episode, 12 amateur bakers who

are keen to show they are the best in Britain. They are about to be faced with cake week, as they whip up a fruity signature bake, before tackling a children's tea party classic for the technical challenge and then creating a tricky illusion cake for the showstopper. But who will be more nervous – the contestants or Channel 4 as it waits to find out if the viewers have followed the Bake Off to its new home?

WEDNESDAY

Love Your Home and Garden ITV, 8pm

The most recent run of Love Your Garden may have only finished last week, but Alan Titchmarsh is already back with a new series – and this time, he's not just transforming deserving people's backyards, he's also tackling their interiors as well. In the first episode, he travels to Banbury, Oxfordshire, to meet Donna and Lee, and their daughters Claudia, 12, and Leoni, 9. Four years ago, Donna suffered a near-fatal heart attack which left her with severely restricted sight, and her young daughters now act as her carers. Alan discovers

that the family's cramped, cluttered rooms and dark interiors are making it difficult for Donna to move around the house without tripping, so he sets about creating a light-filled space, while also turning the garden from a place currently used for storing rubbish into somewhere the girls can play.

THURSDAY

Gypsy Kids: Our Secret World Channel 5, 9pm

They may be young, but the children featured in this documentary series are often experienced beyond their years, thanks to the freedoms and challenges that come with being part of one of the most marginalised communities in Britain. In the first episode of the series, we meet nine-year-old Irish traveller

Margaret and her cousins, who are being evicted by bailiffs every seven days – and after they recently pulled their trailers into a school playground, resulting in 900 pupils being told



Educating Greater Manchester, Thursday, Channel 4, 9pm

to say home, emotions are running high. Meanwhile, nine-year-old Indiana is moving into a chalet on her family's site, which means she will have a bed to herself – and, for the first time, a bathroom inside her home.

Educating Greater Manchester Channel 4, 9pm

New series. Life at Harrop Fold Secondary in Salford, Greater Manchester, a school at the heart of a changing community, following the teachers dealing with daily events. In this first episode, the pupils are comparing Trump's hairstyle with Hitler's, writing rude words on the back of a delivery van, and adjusting to an influx of students from a range of foreign countries. The school also has to respond to the shockwaves of the terrorist attack at the Ariana Grande concert, which eight of the pupils and one teacher attended.

FRIDAY

World Cup Live ITV, 7.15pm

Malta v England (Kick-off 7.45pm). Mark Pougatch presents coverage of the Group F qualifier from Ta' Qali National Stadium in Attard. Malta have lost every group match so far, but produced a spirited display in last October's reverse fixture at Wembley.

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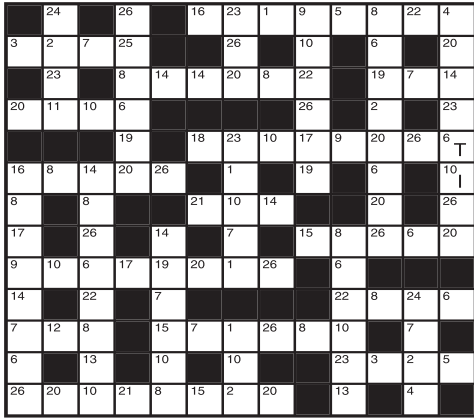
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BRAIN GYM

No.444

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	B	H	Q	J	V	S	T	C	K	L	A	Y	M
14	I	D	Z	F	P	G	O	E	R	N	X	W	U

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

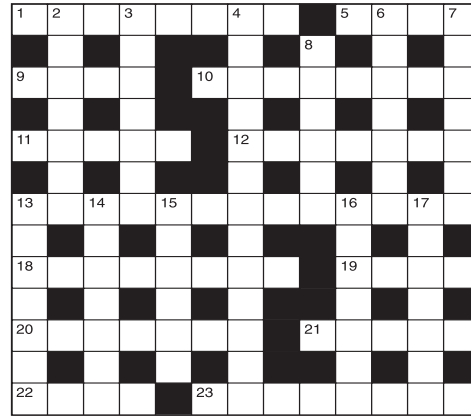
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- One instrument before another in the dance (8)
- This deck looks just the same both ways (4)
- Just one appearing in distant setting (4)
- He seeks perfection for one transaction before it's ruined (8)
- Coming from the chandler's is a long rope (5)
- Framework on which climbers are trained (7)
- Used by one with a view to entertainment (10,3)
- Make a record showing the range of a voice (8)
- Sounds like part of a gun emplacement (4)
- Applaud an application to the insurance company, we hear (7)
- Appears to observe the manuscript (5)
- Waterproof clothes used by painters (4)
- A man of scruples, as far as physics are concerned! (8)

Down

- Like some stonework on a track (7)
- Hurried back with the price to present an account (7)
- Master pleaded for a ship (6,7)
- Nothing strangely rising from these sources (7)
- One with a complaint not complaining! (7)
- What the drummer produces for a military spectacle? (6)
- Road not affected by severe weather (7)
- Record one visit cut short - that's reasonable (7)
- Long-range spectacles (6)
- An accumulation reposing in the bird sanctuary? (4-3)
- Makes the situation grave (7)



Quick Clues:

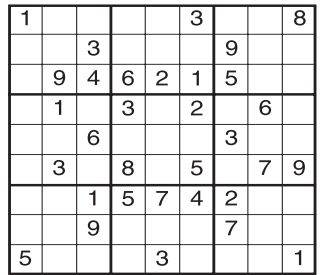
Across

- Carry on (8)
- Great potentate (4)
- Stupefy (4)
- Acute poverty (8)
- Droll (5)
- Scintillate (7)
- Declaration (13)
- Curb (8)
- Wise (4)
- Sedition (7)
- Bolt (5)
- Appear (4)
- Estrange (8)

Down

- Open-air (7)
- Stress (7)
- Inadvertent (13)
- Spot (7)
- Esteem (7)
- Hit (6)
- Corsairs (7)
- Indecent (7)
- Attack (6)
- Errand (7)
- Overlook (7)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	9	2	3	8	4	5	6	7
4	5	7	2	9	6	1	8	3
3	6	8	7	1	5	2	9	4
9	3	6	8	7	2	4	1	5
8	1	5	4	6	3	9	7	2
2	7	4	9	5	1	6	3	8
6	4	1	5	3	7	8	2	9
5	8	3	6	2	9	7	4	1
7	2	9	1	4	8	3	5	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC: Across: 1 Lilies; 4 Ransom; 9 Gives one's word; 10 Collect; 11 Natal; 12 Skate; 14 Hewed; 18 Okapi; 19 Rosette; 21 Knock-out punch; 22 Nudity; 23 Wagers. Down: 1 Legacy; 2 Live like a lord; 3 Ensur; 5 Absence; 6 Short sentence; 7 Models; 8 Knots; 13 Trinket; 15 Look in; 16 Trout; 17 Meshes; 20 Sepia.
QUICK: Across: 1 Hidden; 4 Intend; 9 Off one's own bat; 10 America; 11 Eerie; 12 Leap; 14 Delay; 18 Attic; 19 Overseer; 21 Head over heels; 22 Sheath; 23 Crater. Down: 1 Hookah; 2 Differentiate; 3 Ennui; 5 Nowhere; 6 Embarrassment; 7 Dither; 8 Essay; 13 Pick out; 15 Pathos; 16 Bower; 17 Geyser; 20 Ether.

Quiz

- How is the convolvulus genus of plants also known?
- Which flower is depicted on the Royal British Legion's logo?
- On which part of the body is a lobotomy performed?
- In Greek mythology, from whose blood is the winged horse Pegasus supposed to have sprung?
- Which major London store removed the royal warrants from its shopfront in December 2000?
- What was the capital of the Confederacy in the US Civil War?
- Who was the first Hollywood legend to feature on a US postage stamp?
- In which year was the GLC abolished?
- What is the medical specialty concerned with the study of disease processes called?
- Which late US actor's real surname was Matuschanskayasky?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 A fragrant shrub; 2 Parakeet; 3 Malcolm McDowell; 4 Outer Hebrides; 5 Daniele Gatti; 6 Richard III; 7 Xylophone; 8 Friends of the Earth; 9 Opal; 10 Dave Bassett.

Niner: HERALDING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

959156
2924586
6536874

gives a participant,
gives a casual participant,
gives a second casual participant.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Enjoy living it up like the A-listers

IT'S not uncommon to go to Los Angeles and bump into an A-lister or four. I once saw Johnny Depp about 15 minutes after I'd ogled his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

But, when celebrities need a quick escape from the glitz and paparazzi, they hop on a plane to Los Cabos. The Mexican hideaway, on the sun-baked tip of the southern Baja California peninsula, is just two and a half hours from LAX airport. Probably less if you're zooming over via private jet, like the Kardashians clan.

Los Cabos has two major towns connected by 'the Corridor' - San Jose del Cabo (more chilled) and Cabo San Lucas (more lively) - and a whole load of palm-fringed beach in between. Here are seven reasons why celebrities like Jennifer Aniston, George Clooney and Cameron Diaz are such big fans of the destination...

1. The Thunderbirds-style villas

Cindy Crawford and George Clooney built side-by-side 'Casamigos' Cabo villas, Sylvester Stallone spends his winters in Pedregal, and Jennifer Aniston practically has her own hideaway on a luxury hotel complex. Mainly only visible by boat and nestled in cliffs - just like Thunderbirds' Tracy HQ.

2. The whale watching

You may not even need to go on a boat trip to see the spectacle of grey, blue and humpback whales. From the end of November to March, chances are you'll be lucky enough to spot them from your sunlounger.

3. The super spas

Spas are anything but low-key in Los Cabos. Jennifer Lopez, Jessica Alba and Cameron Diaz are all said to be regulars at Las Ventanas al Paraiso's spa, which resembles a colonial Mexican hacienda.

4. The Mexican cuisine

Nothing quite hits the spot like authentic creamy guac, tortillas and tacos.

Sunloungers and sea views at Grand Velas



A surfer on Los Cabos beach at sunset



5. The statement art

Where do the likes of George Clooney and Leonardo DiCaprio go to get one-off works of art? They've been known to browse San Jose Del Cabo's famous gallery district (artcabo.com); a downtown hive of creativity featuring original paintings, photography, sculpture, pottery and glasswork.

6. The Sea of Cortez cruises

You're unlikely to see celebs on guided excursions - although Cabo Adventures do offer an excellent Luxury Day Sailing trip for \$109 per person for four hours (cabo-

adventures.com). A-listers are more likely to charter their squad a super-luxe yacht.

7. The celebrity standards

When your private butler shows you to your room and asks if you'd like the contents of your suitcase unpacked while you hit the beach, you know the resort's got celebrity appeal. That the level of service at the new super-luxe Grand Velas Los Cabos. The 304-room resort opened in late 2016 and Hollywood actress Juliette Lewis was one of the first to check-in. From sunloungers surrounding the triple-tier infinity pool, to serene beach

cabanas there are countless places to kick back and feast on insanely tasty tostadas.

How to get there...

Rooms from US \$548 (£434 approx) per person per night, all-inclusive. Visit loscabos.grandvelas.com

Fly from London Heathrow to Cabo San Lucas SJD via Mexico City with Aeromexico, from £499.47 in November 2017. Visit aeromexico.com

For details on Los Cabos in Mexico, visit visitoscabos.travel

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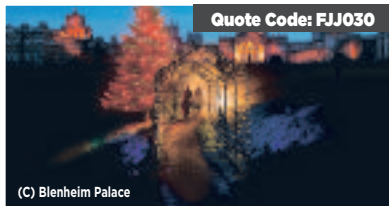
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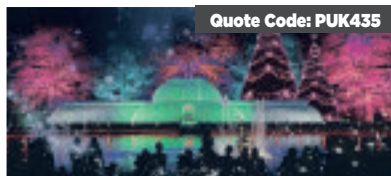
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SALLY young 50, happy go lucky blonde, looking to let her hair down with a happy, down to earth guy with dark hair. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428269

MIA, attractive married lady from Birmingham, are, looking to meet a discreet gent, any age, any area for fun times. I am 49yrs old but look younger. Text Only. Box: 4079581

PAM, 40, cuddly feminine young looking female, OHAC, financially secure, looking for fun times without complications with likeminded male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427753

TINA, 47yrs, GSOH and good figure with average looks. I want a similar man, GSOH looks important. Age is but a number. I have no car but can accommodate. Text Only. Box: 4145368

SUE, 47, attractive lonely brunette who loves evenings in/out, music, WLTm someone sincere to love and get close to, why not give me a call? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427549

JANE, new to area, hoping to meet an older gent. I am 38yrs, brunette with boyish leggy figure. N/S with GSOH. I've a good job and small flat which I own. Text Only. Box: 4099268

TERESA, friendly lady with GSOH, curvy build and attractive looks, 50 something, seeking romantic male 45-55. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428363

TRACY, 68yrs, recently retired and has time on her hands. Would love to meet a much much much younger chap for carefree times. Text Only. Box: 4006039

ARE you a gent with GSOH 60-70 and looking for some fun then call me, Leah, I'm 57yrs, slim, attractive and looking for fun. ACA. Or text me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428381

HELLO, my name is Pia, I am a very petite, kind and respectful Asian girl, hoping to meet an older white man. I'm 23yrs old and have just moved here. Text Only. Box: 4177099

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 41399

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KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

LINDA, 48yrs, young looking blonde lady, slim and attractive. Hoping to meet new men friends, call and let's see what happens. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428377

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

MARGARET, attractive blonde widow, living alone and hoping to find a nice gentleman soulmate. I have lots to offer so please call or text me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428375

JOY, mid 50s independent lady, brunette, loves dining out, seeking gent of any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428373

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

ATTRACTIVE widow, loves life, 60s music, walking and fun. Hoping to meet a similar minded gent 60-80 for life's adventures. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428371

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365

NICOLA, 37yrs mixed race beauty, just moved to the area from London so a bit lonely. Looks unimportant may have GSOH and be kind. ACA/text answered. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428369

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual outings. Tel No: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979

WANTED, submissive gent by attractive, kind and respectful Asian girl, if you want to know more. Aka Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428367

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205

ATTRACTIVE lady, young at heart, would like to meet genuine caring guy for coffee and chats, plus days out. Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6035338

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851

SALLY young 50, happy go lucky blonde, looking to let her hair down with a happy, down to earth guy with dark hair. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428269

ATTRACTIVE lady 61yrs young. Looking for friendship, maybe more with genuine gent. I'm feminine and curvy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428157

SASKA, kind hearted Asian lady, single and still living with family so seeking very discreet relationship with strong minded man. I am 29yrs but like mature experienced men. Text Only. Box: 4047094

CHRISTINE, 60 something lady, blue eyed blonde. Sincere, solvent and kind. Call me if you are interested in meeting up. Looks unimportant. Must be N/S. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428155

MIA, attractive married lady from Birmingham, are, looking to meet a discreet gent, any age, any area for fun times. I am 49yrs old but look younger. Text Only. Box: 4079581

I am a 57-year-old lady, 5ft 8ins tall, short brownish hair. I am of medium build, outgoing, caring and WLTm similar male. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6024848

TAMARA, 44yrs, beautiful Indian lady seeks a friendly gent 40+. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428147

TINA, 47yrs, GSOH and good figure with average looks. I want a similar man, GSOH looks important. Age is but a number. I have no car but can accommodate. Text Only. Box: 4145368

ATTRACTIVE widow, attractive, blonde GSOH, solvent with good figure. All that's missing is a nice man 60+. Call me if you are interested. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428139

JANE, new to area, hoping to meet an older gent. I am 38yrs, brunette with boyish leggy figure. N/S with GSOH. I've a good job and small flat which I own. Text Only. Box: 4099268

MAY, 64, widow, GSOH, lonely and WLTm a nice, kind gentleman of similar age, hopefully someone who likes walking and animals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428217

TRACY, 68yrs, recently retired and has time on her hands. Would love to meet a much much much younger chap for carefree times. Text Only. Box: 4006039

SLIM attractive lady, 59yrs, feminine, kind, loves life. Call me or text me your number and let's meet up. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428143

LADY, 63, WLTm a gentleman of similar age, for friendship and outings. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428029

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SHEILA, 64, widow, GSOH, likes to get out and about, walking, animals, reading, classical music, WLTm a male of similar age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428181

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MALE 46, genuine and honest and very caring looking for a LTR with lady. Text only Replies. Mailbox: 5422168

MALE 20s, chilled out and happy in life looking for woman to share life with. Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6034839

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923

MIKE, male, 61, seeks black or Asian lady, any age for adult fun, maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6010228

MALE, late 60s, N/S, retired, 5ft9, slim build, enjoys holidays abroad, weekends away, travel, meals out. Looking to meet female, N/S, who enjoys similar interests, to share good times together, for friendship and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428219

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175

MALE, a young 60 would love to meet a cuddly lady. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6016333

SINGLE dad, tall, blonde hair, good looking, keeps fit, loves the cinema, meals out, looking for a single lady for date nights. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428163

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, genuine lady, for fun times and LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831

Hi my name is Jay. I'm looking for a lady to have a lovely evening with, maybe once or twice a week. Looking forward to hearing from you soon. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427927

JACK 23, single, tall, young looking guy, kind and respectful, seeking female age/looks not important for mutual NSA fun. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026038

MALE 64, fit, non-smoker, looking for NSA fun with lady, any age. I am kind and caring but miss the touch of a woman. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025714

TALL, dark, attractive male, 56, 6ft, WLTm an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109

MALE, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303

FUN loving Irish man, seeks relationship, for fun times and dating out. Please reply in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428077

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, honest lady, for fun times and LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831

I am Kev, 57, looking for a lady in my life. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6023170

SHAUN, 50, honest, reliable, OHOC, employed, animal lover, likes walks in the country, meals out in country pubs, walking my dogs, looking for my soul mate. If you would like to know more get in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427497

GENTLEMAN, kind, considerate, tactile, thoughtful and caring, hobbies include growing Fuschia and vintage tractors, looking for a country girl, someone with no plans of grandeur. Truth and trust number 1 as I trust you so you tell me the truth, and vice versa. Looking for someone to hold and love forever. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427914

SINGLE male, 43, looking for female friends for txt, phone chats, maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6017886

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923

MALE 40s, 5ft 8ins, brown hair, seeks lovely honest girl for fun and friendship please. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6018513

MARK 40s, from the Birmingham area WLTm a female, any nationality, for LTR. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6016342

MALE, 50, brown hair, brown eyes, average looks, 18 and a half stone, good sense of humour, animal lover with loads of love and security to give to the right person. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418783

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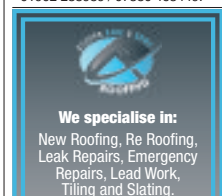
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4

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5-dr,

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1.0

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FSH.

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£2,195.

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641948.



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Vauxhall s/h.

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cars under £1500



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985242.



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Parking Sensors

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December.

£550 ono.

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£795

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RENAULT CLIO

AUTOMATIC 1400cc

53 reg, five door, lady owner,

nine months MoT, well main-

tained, any trial welcome, silver,

must be seen, clean car,

BMW 5 still a premium benchmark

By Darren Cassey

When the BMW 5 Series gets refreshed it's a pretty big deal. It has long been considered the benchmark for premium saloons and estates, but with new rivals such as Volvo trying to worm their way into a sector dominated by BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz, it's no surprise that the 5 Series has been overhauled to stay ahead of the competition.

Aside from a slightly more slender appearance, the 5 Series looks very similar to its predecessor. However, under the skin there have been plenty of changes. For example, the chassis has been reworked using more lightweight materials, which contribute to an overall weight reduction of 100kg.

Meanwhile the notoriously smooth ride has been further optimised with a new suspension setup at the front and the rear.

Our 530d test car came with a 3.0-litre, six-cylinder diesel engine. It's an ideal powerplant for those who drive long distances, with excellent response and a surging, torquey power delivery. Resist the urge to put your foot down and you can easily achieve nearly 60mpg.

The 2.0-litre diesel is even more efficient, promising economy in excess of 60mpg and costing less to begin with. It doesn't have the same badge appeal as the 530d, but it has more than enough performance so you never feel like you're missing out.

A calm, relaxing drive has always been the 5 Series' key selling point, and BMW has exceeded its own high standard with the latest model. At motorway speeds it manages to smooth out the road so that even long drives are dispatched with zero stress.



It's a big car and struggles to hide it

What's arguably even more impressive is that this is not at the expense of great handling. The steering weight is perfectly judged and the 5 Series refrains from rolling around making it surprisingly fun to throw down a back road.

BMW's premium estate is a big car, and it struggles to hide it. The design is more slender than before, with the bodywork appearing to hug the frame more tightly. Particularly in the sportier trims, the addition of small aerodynamic wings help to give a more aggressive appearance, though the standard car does look a tad plain.

The interior is fantastic and exactly what you'd expect from a premium estate, sitting further towards the luxury 7 Series than the more family focused 3 Series. A large central screen plays host to all the menus and satellite navigation functions, with many controls able to be used by waving your hands around.

The only complaint that can be levelled at the car is that the seats are quite



The addition of small aerodynamic wings help to give a more aggressive appearance

uncomfortable, resulting in minor back ache over long distances. Be sure to try out different seats and driving positions before settling on one.

The 5 Series' specification is impressive across the board, with even models lower down the pecking order not giving the feeling you're being short changed – a few blanked off buttons the only hint that something is up.

The standard SE model still gets the widescreen on the dashboard, two-zone climate control and ambient lighting, which makes night driving really pleasant. Optional extras that are worth going for include adaptive cruise control, Driving Assistant Plus (which includes a range of advanced driving aids) and wireless mobile phone charging. It's difficult to find much to fault with the

BMW 5 Series. It was already at the top of the game and with a few choice revisions, such as a lighter chassis and upgraded suspension, there's no doubt it'll continue at the top of the sales charts.

Every mile behind the wheel reminds you why this is the premium saloon benchmark – sorry to BMW's rivals, but expect business as usual in the sales charts.

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Kia makes bold effort with Cee'd GT

By John Griffiths

It's not difficult to see the attractions of a performance hatchback: a combination of sports car-like driving dynamics and family car practicality.

Some have become icons in their own right like the Golf GTi, Ford ST, Leon Cupra and Honda's Civic Type-R to name but a few.

That makes it hard for newcomers to edge their nose into the fray but Kia is making a bold and appealing effort with its sporting flagship, the Cee'd GT.

It's perhaps best described as a 'warm' hatch rather than a full-blooded 'hot' machine but combines more reasonable costs with impressive real-world performance. An excellent chassis makes for excellent handling (and it's fun, too) but that doesn't come at the expense of a harsh ride – it's more civilised than extreme.

The £24,010 car's engine is pretty remarkable too, turning out 201Ps of power and – thanks to turbocharging – a hefty 265Nm of torque. Enough to take you from a standstill to 62mph in just 7.3 seconds.

Official average fuel consumption is 38.2mpg (laboratory tests) which is reasonable for a car of this power potential. My 'real world' test result in an average 34mpg.

The turbo increases the standard 1,600cc engine's output by 51per cent and torque by 61 per cent but that isn't the only benefit.

This latest version produces maximum torque at lower revs (1,500rpm) than its predecessor for slightly quicker but smoother, more linear acceleration up to the limit. It feels effortless, civilised and particularly quiet – although you can switch on the new noise generator (an electronic device) for a

more growly, sporting sound if that's how the mood takes you. Regulations prevent the use of old-fashioned growly exhausts that can be heard outside the car.

It's switched on by pressing the 'GT' button on the steering wheel which also changes the speedo from an analogue to a digital display, with torque and turbo gauges as well.

This best of two worlds engine really defines the Cee'd: it cruises for the most part at a near silent 2,000rpm but put your foot down for a quick overtake and it surges forward on a very convincing wave of power and torque. The benchmark 37 to 60mph overtaking sprint takes just 5.4 seconds and the job's done.

The chassis has the same dual personality, too. The sports suspension, while firm-ish, as you'd expect, it is well damped so you don't feel the worst some of our bumpy B-roads can offer. It also helps to keep you accurately on your chosen track on such roads, without discernible body roll and no signs of under or oversteer. Add sharp steering and it's a rewarding experience for the keen driver.

This latest Cee'd flagship comes with new 18-inch alloys shod with grippy 225/40 low profile tyres. Bigger disc brakes all round have reduced stopping distances, too.

The interior is a pleasant place to be, with room for five adults: the rear seats are quite generous and there are stylish and comfortable leather and suede Recaro sports seats in front. Trim includes high gloss black and chrome highlights.

As you'd expect of the flagship of the range, the specification is comprehensive, as indeed it is for its sibling – the three-door pro_cee'd GT which is £500 cheaper, as it's essentially the same car but with three instead of five doors.

Equipment upgrades on this latest GT



The GT is fun, competent and offers reasonable value-for-money which out it in contention as a class leader in this particular niche

include an MP3 compatible DAB radio as part of a six-speaker audio system, a new seven-inch display screen for the satnav, traffic messaging and reversing camera.

The sports-style 'D' shaped leather steering wheel has a comprehensive array of finer/thumb remote controls, for communications, audio, speed limiter and cruise control, among others. Also standard are electric windows and mirrors, dual zone air conditioning, heated front seats and steering wheel, and rear privacy glass.

All Cee'd and Pro_cee'd models are easily recognisable by their unique 'ice cube' design

LED driving and fog lamps below the main, wrap-around headlights. But the two GT versions are also distinguished by a lower, broader bumper and air dam and larger centre air intake, as well as twin exhausts at the rear.

Body styling touches as new sill mouldings, the bigger wheels, aluminium pedals and red brake calipers also point to the car's potential and character.

In engineering the new Gts, Kia hasn't tried to rival some of the establish track day favourites but instead produced a pair of cars which offer real-world performance

in a fun but civilised manner. It comes at considerably less cost than some of those more focussed rivals, too, along with a full seven years/100,000 mile warranty which is not be to sneezed at.

The GT is fun, competent and offers reasonable value-for-money which put it in contention as a class leader in this particular niche.

If you want a turbocharged Cee'd but don't have pockets deep enough for GT land, for around £3,500 less you can have the three cylinder, 118Ps model in sportily-themed GT Line specification.

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VW confirms production of all-electric Microbus



The new Microbus unites past and future as well as Pebble Beach and the Silicon Valley

Volkswagen has confirmed that it will be putting its all-electric Microbus into production.

Making the announcement at the Concours d'Elegance in Pebble Beach, California, Volkswagen CEO Herbert Diess said that the Microbus "unites past and future as well as Pebble Beach and the Silicon Valley".

It is due to hit dealerships in 2022, and will come as the second vehicle in the compact I.D. range behind a compact hatchback.

Diess added: "After the presentations at the global motor shows in Detroit and Geneva, we received a large number of letters

and emails from customers who said, 'please build this car.'

"The Microbus, which is what the Bulli is called in America, has always been part of the California lifestyle.

"Now we're bringing it back by developing Volkswagen's next e-generation and by reinventing the Bulli as an electric vehicle."

Though Volkswagen hasn't disclosed much about the layout of the van, it has said the batteries will be mounted in the vehicle floor – most likely for better weight distribution.

The electric motor's compact size also means that the Microbus

has short overhangs and a long wheelbase, maximising space inside.

Diess said: "The vehicle therefore looks like a short compact van on the outside, even as it offers the generous interior space of a large van."

Volkswagen also said the I.D. Buzz will also be available with Level 3 autonomous capabilities, meaning that 'safety critical' features will be controlled by the van, though the driver is still able to pilot the vehicle should they want to.

However, they do not have to monitor the road ahead in the same way as with Level 1 or Level 2.



The first eleven, with a combination of older heads and experience, alongside youth and ambition



A bright future is on the horizon for Wolverhampton United with a new management team to lead them



Joint managers, Danny Carter, left, and Andrew Carrier



The managers seen during a training session at Prestwood Road

United for a new era with rising ambition

THE young management team have demanded their players' ambitions match their own as a new era begins at Wolverhampton United.

Danny Carter and Andrew Carrier are thinking big in their first post as joint bosses at the West Midlands League Division Two outfit.

It's been a long time since they've had much to shout about at their Prestwood Road home, which is in the Wednesfield area of the city.

It's 41 years since the current guise of United came to being, after Oxley and Whitmore Old Boys merged and joined the West Midlands League.

They have played in all three divisions of that pyramid, with four separate stints in the Premier Division until they were relegated for the last time back in 2003.

They went down to Division Two three years ago and finished eighth out of 14 teams last season, so improvement is much needed.

Experience

Carter and Carrier have been friends for years and are used to Premier Division football, so will want to climb back to that level.

Carter was a popular player at Wednesfield while Carrier has previous coaching experience, serving at Willenhall Town and Wolverhampton Sporting Community.

Both are just starting out in management, aged 24 and 28 respectively, and are determined to succeed for both themselves and the club.

Carrier said: "I've mainly played in the Prem, but I've had a few injuries and I've been watching football since then and constantly trying to get involved."

"Me and Danny have been friends through football for a long time now, he's well known and respected in the game. He's been captain, as a player, at every club he's been at."

"He's been trying to get into jobs here and there

SPORTING FEATURE

By Craig Birch

The players are experienced enough to go out there and think to themselves 'no-one at this level is better than us. We can do it'.

and, when this came up, he phoned me and asked if I'd be interested. I thought it would be great to work with him.

"We came in quite late, it was three weeks into pre-season so it was quite late really, but we quickly made a few phone calls to see what players we could get down. Danny has done really well to get those lads in, I've given him a helping hand with a few numbers and training has gone really well."

"I don't like to put this in a disrespectful way, but a few of them are probably coming towards the end of their careers although they still have plenty to offer to the game. They are all around Premier Division or Division One standard, some of them are the best in the league if you ask me."

"We've hit the ground running and me and Danny are not off the phone to each other every day and we talk, at length, about the squad after we've trained on a Thursday."

"We talked a bit more in depth after we've named the players, then we turn up on a Saturday and go over tactics, before we deliver it to the lads."

"We've set up a fine list, if you're late or don't have a shower or have dirty boots it will cost you."

"It's all for the players, though, it pays for their

group nights out down the line. It gets a bit of a banter going between the lads and they are all trying to get money out of each other. It's all about emptying their pockets!"

They have left to concentrate on their jobs, with owner John Lee and chairperson Hazel Keirle taking care of matters behind-the-scenes.

Recruitment has gathered pace despite the duo arriving relatively late in the summer, succeeding Liam Fieldhouse after Ben Astley quit at the end of last season.

Centre-half Tony Russon has been brought in and named captain while striker Darren Leonard, even at the age of 43, has vast experience at a higher level.

Midfielder Lee Onions has played in the Premier Division for Wednesfield while Daniel Benbow, Jamal Pinnock and Leon Pugh have all turned out at levels above.

Promotion

Back-to-back home games have seen them begin the season unbeaten, with a 4-0 win over FC Darlaston and a 1-1 draw against AFC Billbrook.

They are second on goal difference behind Warstones Wanderers, who have netted 15 goals in two games with 8-1 and 7-3 victories over Ludlow and AFC Bridgnorth Development.

Carter and Carrier expect Wanderers to be involved in the promotion race, but have made their intentions clear – they want to be champions.

Carrier added: "This could be a stepping stone, the aim is promotion and we really want to push on here. Hopefully, we can win the league."

"It's no secret what are ambitions are, I think we will be a force to be reckoned with. From what I'm told, Division Two is quite competitive but, hopefully, our experience can take over."

"Outsiders have asked us what we expect to do and the players are experienced enough to go out there and think to themselves 'no one at this level is better than us. We can do it'."

Wolves are bookies' favourites for league

WOLVES have now been placed as favourites for the Championship title by leading bookmakers after their perfect start to the season. The club have gone from 14-1 since May to 11-4 after their good start to the 2017/18 campaign.

They have already seen off Middlesbrough, Derby and Hull as well as a victory over Yeovil in the league cup. Even before their clash on Saturday, with Cardiff, with Wolves then in second place, but level on points, the Molineux men were touted as the most likely to win the league.

David Stevens, head Of PR at Coral, said: "The odds have tumbled on Wolves for the Championship. They were 14-1 when we first opened betting in late May, and down to 10-1 before the start of the season."

"Their odds since have gone down to 15-2 after their opening win, then 11-2 and they are now 11-4 favourites after last night's victory. To put it into context, Aston Villa were 7-1 title favourites before the season began, but are now out to 14-1."

Homegrown talent is priority for Pulis

TONY PULIS dreams of putting out an Albion team in the Premier League brimming with local talent from Birmingham and the Black Country.

The Baggies boss is impressed with the standard of players being nurtured in the academy and hopes that, in two years' time, those promising youngsters will be first-team regulars. Teenagers Sam Field and Rekeem Harper both played in midfield on the opening day of the season, while Jonathan Leko and Kane Wilson were named on the bench. If Pulis can follow up Gareth Barry's arrival with a few more additions before the window shuts, it may free up some of those youngsters to go out on loan.

The Baggies boss says regular men's football – the kind he can't afford to give them in the Premier League – is crucial for their development.

"The big thing about the football club is they've kept their young players in academy football for far, far too long," he said. "We've got to try and find four or five players to bring into this club to take it up to a level where we can cope without having the kids around us."

Marathon for 20th time will be 'special'

THE 20th running of one of the region's biggest marathons promises to be a 'special' occasion, according to the event's top sponsor. The Carver Wolverhampton City Marathon has been a landmark event since the late 1990s. It is just a matter of days before people take to Wolverhampton's streets for the 20th time in succession on Sunday September 3.

Henry Carver was behind Carvers becoming the major sponsors and underwriters of the event which has run since 1998. Mr Carver, who won the business person of the year award in the Express & Star Business Awards this year, said: "It is special to be marking 20 years."

"We've had a huge amount of support from the people of Wolverhampton and I believe we're fundamentally a charitable city. The numbers this year are looking encouraging and it's going to be more of the same. We always get 2,000-plus and we always give £15,000 to £20,000 to charity."

There will be six events – including the marathon, half-marathon, 10km run, cycle route, walk through West Park and wheel and wheelchair events.



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Exceptional weekend for cricket club

THERE was plenty to celebrate at the Memorial Ground as both Stourbridge first and second teams beat their Worcester Nomads counterparts in the Birmingham League.

Meanwhile, in division five of the Worcestershire League the third team were assured of promotion by beating Old Hill and the fourth team won as well.

A hat-trick by Luke Alexander saw the collapse of Worcester Nomads bowled out for 121 off 42 overs. Opener Tom Keen top scored with 60 off 115 balls. Alexander's 4-20 was backed by Zain Ul Hassan taking 4 for 25 in six overs.

In Stour's reply a brilliant cameo of 33 off 28 balls, including seven fours, by opener Alex Bingham set the platform for skipper Josh Banks (16) and Jade Rickett (21 not out) to guide their side home to victory. Stour had collapsed to 81-5 in the 21st over.

The 20 points have come timely for Stour to stay top five in Division Three.

In the third team a knock of 81 by Ali Shah and four wicket haul by Dave Colesby defeated Old Hill to guarantee skipper Alex Colman's team promotion. Stour secured second place with just one match to go at Barnt Green.

The fourth team notched up a win against Old Hill. Juniors Tom Stephens (71), Ben Concannon (41) and Jack Dudley (41) helped Stour reach the match-winning double hundred.

"It's been an exceptional weekend," said club chairman Harilal Jivan-Patel.

Yeltz paid price for a slow start against newboys

Halesowen Town 1 Farsley Celtic 2
HALESOWEN paid the price for a slow start, falling two goals behind before the interval as they slipped to a narrow home defeat in the Evo-Stik Premier.

Nathan Cartman latched on to Ben Atkinson's ball down the left and curled it superbly into the corner of the net from 15 yards after 29 minutes and Walshaw's low drive soon doubled the lead for the newly-promoted visitors from Yorkshire in the 31st minute.

Halesowen's only first-half chance came just before the break when Ben Clarke's 30-yard shot was tipped over the bar by keeper Graeme McKibben.

Substitute Roland Agbor led a much better second half for the Yeltz and he fired a low shot at McKibben in the 54th minute. McKibben then made a fine save to deny Joe Howell in front of goal after Agbor turned provider. Another Agbor shot was saved by McKibben after 67 minutes.

Agbor eventually pulled a goal back in the 87th minute after a neat one-two with James Spraybut it proved to be too little, too late.

Olympic Games target for young archer



Freya Palmer has won financial help

A BUILDER has given a top Stourbridge archer a cash boost as part of its initiative to help the youngster achieve her Olympic dream.

Wolverhampton-based Persimmon Homes West Midlands launched its Healthy Communities scheme recently with £750 up for grabs each month for the rest of 2017.

The money is to be spent on sports kit, equipment, coaching or facilities.

Fourteen-year-old Freya Palmer was chosen to receive the donation to help upgrade her archery

equipment. The youngster from Wollaston became the National Champion for her age group last month having won the title at the Junior National Championships at Lilleshall in Shropshire.

Freya is part of the Archery GB Performance Academy and aims to shoot for GB internationally and at the 2024 Olympics.

She is the Worcestershire and West Midlands Indoor and Outdoor Champion and holds more than 20 county records and a national record. She is coached every week by Archery GB at Lilleshall.

HEATHENS FACE VITAL CLASH

CRADLEY launched a dramatic comeback but had to settle for a 43-43 draw against local rivals Birmingham at Monmore Green on Monday.

The play-off chasing National League sides played out a thriller but there was nothing to separate the sides.

Heathens now face a must-win Bank Holiday clash with top of the table Belle Vue at Monmore Green on Bank Holiday Monday.

The Heathens' top four hopes looked to be in tatters as they threw away a number of points and were on the receiving end of some controversial refereeing decisions early on Monday night.

Costly mistakes left Will Pottinger's side on the back foot before they rallied to pull level with three races remaining. But they were unable to complete what would have been a remarkable comeback with skipper Tom Perry and Danny Ayres not able to overhaul maximum man Liam Carr in a tense heat 15 decider.

Whilst they could be forgiven for being pleased with a draw given the circumstances, skipper Perry conceded they were frustrated. "We're not really pleased because we wanted the win," he said. "I think we did well to pull it back but we might have had that extra push in the last couple.

Chance

"At least we managed to avoid getting beat and we still have a chance after that. We just can't afford to drop any more points to have a chance to be in those play-offs."

They were 10 points down after nine heats and in need of a miracle but fought back to force a last-heat decider.

Perry kick-started the comeback by blasting from third to first with a brave ride in heat 10. Reserve Conor Dwyer sensationally partnered Danny Ayres to a 5-1 in the next race before Dwyer and Harris repeated the trick in heat 12.

They headed into the final race level and despite shutting out Tom Bacon, Perry and Ayres were unable to hunt down the impeccable Carr.

Rutter goes retro at Classic TT



Michael Rutter will be hoping for double success on his 350cc G50 Matchless at the TT races

VISITORS to the Isle of Man often say the trip is a step back in time and e Hill-born racer Michael Rutter will be racing the same Ducati his father rode to victory at the TT in the 1970s in the Classic Superbike race on Monday.

The 45-year-old has also entered the Senior Classic TT and Lightweight Classic TT on Saturday, and the Junior Classic TT on Monday.

"I've been given some special leathers to

wear when I ride dad's old bike by Alpinestar, which are exactly the same as the ones he wore," said Rutter.

"I'm riding a 750cc Ducati in the in the Superbike race on the Monday morning, then it's the Ripley Land G50 Matchless during the afternoon. I'll be racing the same Ducati my dad raced with the Red Fox team, and finally the Ripley Land Racing Honda 350cc."

Glassboys keeping up pace at top

Stourbridge 1 Nantwich Town 1
STOURBRIDGE maintained their unbeaten start to the season but were left hanging on in the second half after a powerful 45 minutes from the visitors.

Jordan Archer with his fifth goal of the season gave the Glassboys a half time lead with a great finish on 17 minutes, and that was really the sum total of chances in a poor first period.

If Nantwich looked slightly on the back front in the first half, they came out all guns blazing and equalised on 50 minutes through Matthew Bell who got on the end of Casper Hughes' clever chipped cross from the left to score from the edge of the box.

The introduction of Sean Cooke and former Halesowen player Kaiman Anderson proved pivotal for the visitors, the former immediately shooting just wide. Cooke looked very dangerous and another substitute, Stephen Jones should have scored from the edge of the box.

Cooke almost won it on 85 minutes when Gould came out to make a clearance and Cooke sent the ball just over the bar from 30 yards. Stourbridge's only chance of the half came when Daryl Westlake chipped over on 59 minutes.

Whitby 1 Stourbridge 3

Stourbridge remained among early-season frontrunners in the Evo-Stik Premier after pulling off a pleasing victory on the North Yorkshire coast.

The Glassboys made a glorious start when central defender Jack Duggan headed Josh Green's free-kick across goal for defensive partner Paul McCone to crash home after just nine minutes.

Whitby managed to equalise on 23 minutes when Luke Bythway blasted home a stunning 25-yard free-kick which gave Glassboys goalkeeper Matt Gould no chance.

Stour were back in front just after the half-hour mark when Danny O'Callaghan sent Archer clear, who got the better of Bythway before firing home past Whitby goalkeeper Shane Bland.

Stourbridge had to wait until the 81st minute before making certain of the points when Archer combined with Ryan Rowe before slotting home his second goal.

Stourbridge should have gone on to win by a wider margin as twice O'Callaghan went close, just wide on 88 minutes and then denied again a minute into stoppage time by Bland.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



I just wanted to let you know that the party was brilliant last night. Everyone I have spoken to has not stopped talking about how much fun they had. So much so that we would like to hold the same date for next year. Is this possible?

...
Absolutely awesome night last night... you guys smashed it out of the ball park and I think everyone had the most amazing time.

...
It was an amazing night! The feedback we've had is that it was the best party yet! It's been lovely working with you and your team – so much easier this year – how does that work?

...
I just wanted to say a huge thank you for helping us pull off what has been praised as the "best Sky Media Christmas party ever!" I guess your company name is testament to what you guys do!

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Fri	1st	Dec	£49.50	£59.40	Mixed Group		Sat	16th	Dec	£54.50	£65.40	LIMITED PLACES
Sat	2nd	Dec	£49.50	£59.40	Mixed Group		Sun	17th	Dec	£39.50	£47.40	Exclusive Hire
Thu	7th	Dec	£37.50	£45.00	Exclusive Hire		Mon	18th	Dec	£37.50	£45.00	Exclusive Hire
Fri	8th	Dec	£54.50	£65.40	LIMITED PLACES		Tue	19th	Dec	£37.50	£45.00	Exclusive Hire
Sat	9th	Dec	£54.50	£65.40	LIMITED PLACES		Wed	20th	Dec	£39.50	£47.40	Mixed Group & Emergency Services
Sun	10th	Dec	£39.50	£47.40	Mixed Group & Retail		Thu	21st	Dec	£45.00	£54.00	Mixed Group
Wed	13th	Dec	£39.50	£47.40	Exclusive Hire		Fri	22nd	Dec	-	-	SOLD OUT
Thu	14th	Dec	£45.00	£54.00	Exclusive Hire		Sat	23rd	Dec	£49.50	£59.40	Exclusive Hire

SILVER PRICES: Our famous Mixed Group Party nights - open to groups of as few as eight guests
GOLD PRICES: Exclusive Hire nights - available to groups of 300+ guests (based on full capacity)
If you are a private individual you will pay the prices listed under the 'Consumer Price' (including VAT) column.
If you are a business (VAT registered), you will initially pay the higher consumer price but will then re-claim the VAT.
Therefore it is the price listed under the 'Business Price' (excluding VAT) column that your company will end up having paid.
Provisional bookings can be held for 7 days. Deposits are non-refundable.



Scan here for the
full list of available
dates and prices



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SUPERB
FOUR
COURSE
DINNER

THE ROARING TWENTIES

THE CRANE VENUE • BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE • 2017

THE MENU

CANAPÉS

Pea and Mint Espresso (V)

Mini Yorkshire Pudding filled with Beef and Horseradish or Chicken and Redcurrant

Smoked Salmon, Cream Cheese and Cracked Pepper on Citrus Blini

British Cheese Burger Crostini

STARTER

Twice-Baked Cheese Soufflé, Tomato and Basil Bruschetta and a Red Chard and Rocket Salad (V)

Winter Leaves with Caramelised Pumpkin and Red Onion, Crushed Roasted Hazelnuts, Clementine and Sage Dressing (VG)*

MAIN COURSES

Rosemary Grilled Breast of Chicken, Dauphinoise Potatoes, Roasted Winter Vegetables, Green Beans and a Sweet Shallot and Vintage Balsamic Jus

Porcini Mushroom Ravioli with Green Beans, Sun Drenched Tomato and Wilted Rocket, Truffle Cream Sauce and Shaved Parmesan (V)*

Chick Pea, Broad Bean and Spinach Falafel with Roasted Piccolino Tomatoes, Peppers and Zucchini, Rocket, Pine Nuts and Herb Oil (VG)*

DESSERT

Salted Caramel Torte, Chocolate Sauce, Mini Meringues and Honeycomb Crumble (V)

Watermelon, Pineapple, Orange, Kiwi and Strawberry with a Raspberry and Cinnamon Syrup (VG)*

FINALÉ

British and Continental Cheese Buffet with Celery and Grapes from an ongoing station (from 10pm-11pm)

COFFEE AND TEA

Fair Trade Coffee, Tea and Tisanes from an ongoing station (from 10pm-11pm)

SURVIVORS BREAKFAST

Brioche Baps of Grilled Bacon or Vegetarian Sausage

We will accommodate any dietary requirements that we are notified of in advance. Vegetarian (V), Vegan (VG). *These courses must be pre-ordered in advance.



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IDEAL
FOR GROUPS
OF
8 - 550

THE ROARING TWENTIES

THE CRANE VENUE • BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE • 2017

THE PARTY...SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

Take your seats in our richly furnished and stunningly glamorous dining room. Enjoy an exquisite gourmet four course dinner and, for survivors, a special breakfast is served in the small hours before carriages home!

Our chefs have created a sumptuous menu including starters such as twice-baked cheese soufflé, tomato and basil bruchetta and red chard and rocket salad, or winter leaves with caramelised pumpkin and red onion, crushed roasted hazelnuts, clementine and sage dressing.

Mouth-watering main courses include grilled breast of chicken with dauphinoise potatoes, roasted winter vegetables, green beans and a

sweet shallot and vintage balsamic jus, or porcini mushroom ravioli with green beans, truffle cream sauce and shaved parmesan.

While decadent desserts such as salted caramel torte are served, you will be entertained by flapper girl performances and jazz acrobatics.

After dinner, head to the illicit Gambling Den and try your luck at Roulette and Blackjack, or simply dance the night away to the great sounds from our resident DJ!

Our Christmas parties in Birmingham are available from 30 November through to 23 December 2017 with options for exclusive bookings. Check online for the latest availability.

THE PACKAGE

Spectacular Theming and Scenery
Live Jumpin' Jazz Band

Illicit Gambling Den with Charity Casino*
Amazing Aerial Acrobats

Delicious Hot and Cold Canapés
Complimentary Tea Cup of Sparkling Wine
Superb Four Course Dinner
Photobooth

State-of-the-art Disco with Intelligent Lighting
Full Event Management and On-site Security
Survivors Breakfast

Dress code: smart dress - no jeans or trainers

*A small charge applies



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